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THE

WORKS OF THOMAS GOODWIN, D.D.

VOL. XI.

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THE WORKS

OF

THOMAS GOODWIN, D.D.

SOMETIME PRESIDENT OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

With General Preface

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And Memoir

BY ROBERT HALLEY, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE INDEPENDENT NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

VOL. XI.

CONTAINING:

THE CONSTITUTION, RIGHT ORDER, AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, &c.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET AND CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

M.DCCC.LXV.

PREFATORY NOTE.

This is the only Treatise in the whole of this Series on a subject on which there is material difference of opinion amongst Protestants. It is believed that even those Subscribers who least agree with the sentiments of the Author would have been dissatisfied if his works had been rendered imperfect by withholding this Treatise.

That it is not published with any sectarian view, is sufficiently vouched for by the fact, that both the Publisher and Editor belong to that section of the church whose views are specially controverted. Ed.

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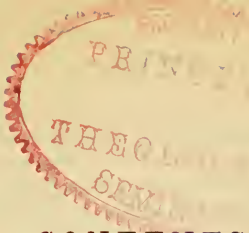

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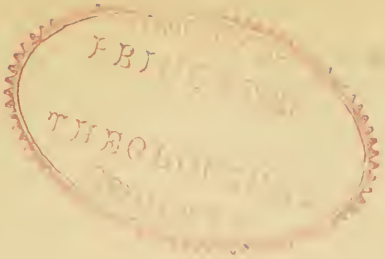
OF THE

CONSTITUTION, RIGHT ORDER, AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST.



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST.

BOOK I.

Of the right institution of the churches of Christ.—That the order and government of those churches are established by divine institution.—What is the nature of divine institutions, and how the knowledge of them is conveyed to us; that Christ hath settled ordinances for worship and discipline, which are to continue unto the end of the world; that the power of church censures and excommunication hath its institution in a more especial manner from Christ, as head of the church.

CHAPTER I.

A brief scheme of the several opinions concerning the constitution and government of the church of Christ.—The truth stated and vindicated.

If it were granted that the churches in the New Testament were formed and fixed bodies, yet the question would still remain about the tenure whereon they hold their formation and constitution; of what kind that tenure is, whether of divine institution; and therefore it will be most seasonable, and conducing to the understanding of all that follows, to give a general prospect of the several opinions about church constitution that are amongst us, ere we proceed.

There are three eminently differing opinions, one of which will certainly prove to be the truth of God, and which soever of them, when all of them are once thoroughly and fairly examined, shall be found to be the truth, we shall rejoice, though it prove that we do suffer loss in our own.

1. Our presbyterian brethren hold the institution of church state to fall upon the whole universal church, as one great body by institution; and then, likewise, upon all the parts thereof, according to the division and subdivision of the whole into several subordinations of greater and lesser bodies, or fixed assemblies, national, provincial, classical, or congregational; so as the universal church on earth being, by Christ's institution, a body politic, and a kingdom in the total consideration of it, and being a similar body,

consisting of similar or like parts for state and condition, it becomes throughout such in all parts thereof. Even as every part of water hath the nature of the whole, so every integral church, be it lesser or greater, national, provincial, congregational, &c., as they are all churches, so in their proportion they are all of them seats of government by an equal, uniform, general institution; and the whole being ordained such, each part, by association and consent, doth become such also. For Christ, by one great charter granted to the whole, did at once authorise and endow all such particular subordinations with ecclesiastical power; only left the distribution of this vast and great commonwealth and body politic, into its parts greater or lesser, to be made by general rules for edification and order, as the law of nature and human wisdom should see fit. But yet all is ordered with this law, that the lesser bodies should be subject to the greater, from top to bottom, and so all to the church universal, and the judicature thereof, so as judicatory appeals might be made from the less to the greater, by virtue of this divine right granted to the whole. And this is said to have been the scope of Christ in his first institution, Tell the church; and by it this kind of power and government being wholly given to the elders of the church, is to be transacted by them in their consistories and associations, even from congregational to general councils, and is therefore only practicable by the meetings of elders chosen and sent from the lesser assemblies to the greater, as abstracted from, and without the convening of the saints, whereof they are elders; for convention of all the particular saints is not only unpracticable in those greater bodies, but in classical assemblies too. And we do freely give this testimony of honour to this opinion, that of all other grounds unto which the presbyterian divines have in these latter days, when put to prove their government, had recourse, this is the most consistent and fairest principle (if it could be proved) to rear up all their subordinations at once, and to endow the constitution of them with a divine light,* which, as the soul in the body, will be equally diffused through every part thereof, and which, if it prove true, we must all turn presbyterians.

2. Some other godly and reverend divines, who do with us wholly reject any such politic model, as an invention of man (which reareth up a worldly frame and theatre for elders, through several stairs, to enter upon the heritage of the Lord), yet agree with our presbyterian brethren in this principle of the catholic universal church being a similar body in the whole, and all the parts thereof. So that as a congregation is in no further respect or consideration a church, nor to any other end, use, or purpose than is the universal; so, likewise, the warrant for, and the privilege of congregational churches being a seat for ordinances and elders, is but from the bare general grant and privilege given to the church universal, which is one day ordained to meet together in heaven, and should now on earth aspire to the state and perfection thereof. And by virtue of this canon law and charter only, saints gather into particular churches, and enjoy ordinances, and all power of government executed therein. So that the whole constitution and order of congregational churches, is only by virtue of that general law of communion of saints, without any further superadded institution of Christ, either electively ordaining of all such other bodies of saints to be the seat of ordinances, or endowing them with any further privilege or power of government than the whole body of saints in the world hath. In a word, the appointment of congregational bodies is, according to this opinion, only virtual, and arising from the general grant to the universal church, and founded but upon the common law of the communion of saints. These two opinions, though thus agreeing

* Qu. 'right'?—ED.

in that fore-mentioned general principle, yet do differ, as two extremes. The one, as we conceive, diffuseth a pretended instituted policy too vastly, engaging all saints and particular churches to subject their consciences, under pain of excommunication, to the determinations and decisions of all the clergy in the world; which is by this constituted as one body, inspired with this soul of government in all the divisions of them as parts of the whole; and such a government may possibly issue in the greatest tyranny. The other, whilst they betake themselves to the common privilege of the church mystical and universal, and merely to that law of communion of saints that is therein, doth hereby shut out and exclude all government or censures, but such as the common law of communion of saints, and the law of nature common to all societies will admit, yea, and in the consequence thereof, takes away all institutions whatsoever of any such discipline or censures, whereof, if particular congregations be found the seat, those congregations themselves also must be by institution.

3. We profess, as in other things, so in this, to run a middle way, which, for aught we yet see, the Scripture chalks out to us.

1. We maintain that assertion of a church universal, as the general body of all, and that particular churches are as parts thereof. Yet so as with our own Amesius, and others who have been esteemed orthodox divines, we conceive that the notion or consideration of church, which the universal body of saints stands under, is merely and purely mystical, and such also to be the union and communion thereof, as with Christ, so of all the members thereof among themselves. And further, we assert this notion or name of mystical church, to be given not only to the invisible company of the elect, and real members of Christ the Head, but to the visible company of professors of Christianity that do walk as saints, and are esteemed as such by saints through the world. Unto whom, as taken in the lump and outward view, as Christ is reckoned to be an outward head to them, as on earth considered, so upon whom also, taken in the lump and outward visibility, as well as upon the invisible company, the notion of the church mystical may be put, it being in this distinction opposed to a church instituted, or that which is a politic body under Christ.

2. We assert, that until the mystical body of the elect shall meet together in heaven, God hath appointed and ordained the visible saints on earth, being diffused over all the world, and thin sown therein, to be knit together in particular bodies, over which he hath appointed elders, pastors, and teachers, officers by his institution; which bodies, consisting of both, should be the public holders forth of his truth and worship, and the subject of the privilege of all ordinances, and seats also of a power and government, for these saints to be subjected to, and reduced in case of scandals. And the honour of Christ is hereby to be vindicated, and his ordinances kept pure, although there were no Christian magistrates in the world that would take cognisance of such scandals.

3. And further, we conceive that the gathering of saints into such particular bodies to Christ, thus to be the seat of such officers, ordinances of worship, and government, is, by a general institution and endowment of Christ, over and above the catholic warrant of communion of saints, although including and taking in all the rules and laws thereof. And accordingly the measure and proportion and extent of these bodies, and what the limits and bounds thereof were to be, is set forth by institution, as also the organisation of this body, what kind of officers or organical members shall be in it. These are all to be found set out by him, as in his wisdom he foresaw would best suit those ends which this institution of such bodies of saints should

serve to, and as should be fitted to the privileges these bodies are endowed with, Christ having also (as to his own institution he doth) made an answerable special blessing (which special promise of blessing doth indeed, if there were no more, make an institution and ordinance of that thing to which it is made) of being with such assemblies of his, over and above the blessing which, from the virtual catholic relation and communion between Christians in general, and on occasional ways, would flow.

4. These instituted bodies of churches we humbly conceive to be, for the bounds and proportion, or measure of them, only congregational, which are the fixed seat and subject of all ordinances of worship, and who are the seat of all sorts of officers or organical members, that serve for the use of the whole; and that these also, by and with their officers, are the sole seat of that government, and the acts thereof, which may more properly be termed government, *i. e.* that is judicially to bind the soul (which is accompanied with a promise, that such a soul shall be bound in heaven), and in Christ's name also to deliver to Satan, &c., which is an instituted punishment, over and above the sphere of that catholic communion, and beyond what any company of angels or saints as members of, or by virtue of the catholic grant, can or ought to take on them, execute, and pronounce; and from which, rightly administered, there can be no appeal, nor of which no act of repeal can be made by any supreme court on earth; though, if not rightly administered, it is null, and of no force. And these bodies thus endowed hath Christ appointed as under-schools of his foundation, wherein, by the enjoyment of all his ordinances, his saints living therein whilst on earth might be tutored, built up, and formed and fashioned for that great university, when all the saints shall meet in heaven. And thus, over and above the general communion of saints, there are, and ought to be by Christ's institution, political, ecclesiastical bodies or churches, that are the seat of a spiritual government, wherein we join with the first opinion.

5. And yet we further affirm, that out of the circuit and bounds of these instituted privileged seats for worship and government, taking all these saints, elders, and churches, whether in a city, province, nation, yea, the whole world, among them as so considered, that common law of the mystical communion of saints which the catholic relation obligeth to, takes place; so that as there is a law of single communion and non-communion between saint and saint in case of offence, so between church and church, or greater or lesser combinations of churches, as occasion is, or may be, of intercourse either way. And therein churches proceed with churches, not *politicé*, or as armed by Christ with a judicial power of giving up to Satan; but they proceed and deal each with other *modo mystico*, or with a moral declarative power only, which law of mystical communion yet obligeth them to all the same duties for substance, each to other, that that political power obligeth them in a congregation unto. And thus far we also join with the second opinion, humbly professing that either to make the church universal in the whole, and all the parts, to be a political instituted body, armed with government, as the first opinion doth; or, on the other side, to make the communion and power in congregational bodies, and the institution thereof, to be but virtual, from what is given to the church universal, and but similar thereunto, as the second opinion doth; to be both of them mistaken. Apprehending much rather the truth to lie in a communion of saints here on earth, compounded and made up (for the kind thereof) of both kinds of constitution; the one a fixed, instituted, and political communion, superadded to the obligation of the mystical relation of saints one to another, as such, and this to be in and between the members of a particular congregation; the

other, simply mystical, and moral, and occasional, and that to be between congregations each with other, and indeed between all the churches in the world. So as, whilst these saints are knit and united into such particular churches for the enjoyment of ordinances, with power to preserve them pure, they yet are both, as saints and as a church, to hold all sorts of correspondency, and are by Christ obliged to all sorts of communion, and which, accordingly, we do profess to hold and maintain with all saints and churches, according to the several degrees of purity amongst them.

This being a true scheme and general prospect of the several opinions amongst us, the particulars of all which we shall in order pursue in this discourse in such a due method as may conduce most to clear the truth, I shall now apply myself to consider whether these particular churches, or fixed bodies of saints and elders (whether congregational or classical, or whatever else they shall prove to be), are to hold their constitution and formation by any special divine institution ; for the clearing of which we shall have occasion first to have to do with that principle forementioned, whether over and above the general charter of the church universal, and the laws and rules of the communion of saints belonging thereunto, there is not a superadded institution for the constitution of particular churches, and for the endowing them with these privileges which, as churches, is found to be bestowed upon them; and then we shall prove that even the setting forth the bounds and limits of those bodies, the extensive power of elders, and measure and proportion of these churches that are the seat of government, must also necessarily be set forth by such a special divine institution.

CHAPTER II.

That the constitution of a church, and the rules of its order and government, are established by a certain institution of Christ. Some propositions laid down in order to the demonstration of this truth.

The church universal is a church by an higher ground than by that of institution ; it is rather the object of God's decree. And their meeting in heaven, and making a general assembly, is not so much by virtue of a command, or by appointment declared in his revealed will, as by a decree of his secret will, and through the efficacious power of it, the same that raiseth them, wraps them up in the clouds, and after carries them to heaven, and presents them together at the latter day, as it is said of Christ, Ps. ii. As their worship there is only natural worship, not anything that belongs to the second command, so, nor is their meeting by virtue of that command. But now, if all the saints on earth were no more than could meet in one place, yet that these should meet as a church for such and such ordinances, which in heaven they shall not have, this must needs be from an institution of Christ's, over and above their being the church in general, as the ordinances themselves are established by such an institution ; for they gather together in his name, and excommunicate in his name, as well as they baptize in his name ; and therefore, if baptism be an institution, their gathering together must be an institution also ; and indeed, if the government and the worship be by institution, the seat or subject must needs be so. As if the officers and the laws of a college or incorporate town be by a law and a charter, the college or corporation itself, the form of it and warrant to be so, must be much more. Nothing in any kingdom depends more upon a charter and the supreme authority than the embodying of men into societies, and the enab-

ling them to act in them. And so the constitution of these spiritual bodies, the churches, hath a necessary dependency on this authority of Christ. Those bodies to be ruled, they are called the house of God, and the church of God. 'If he rule not his own house well, how shall he take care of the church of God?' 1 Tim. iii. 5. Why is it called the church of God, but because of God's institution, as the Lord's supper and the Lord's day, have their names from the Lord's institution? And it is called the house of God and the temple of God; and as the temple was by institution, so this church of Christ too.

And, indeed, that to which a promise is, for that there is a command, which is all one with an institution, and an institution is conveyed in a promise. In the Old Testament all their solemn assemblies (which were the types of ours) were by an institution, both who, and where, and how, as those for worship in the temple, the Sanhedrim for government; therefore the things typified much more.

But farther, what the apostles did teach the saints to become, for that there is an institution, for they taught nothing but what Christ commanded them, Mat. xxviii. 20. And when they had taught them to become churches, they wrote to them as such, and the Holy Ghost owneth them as such. And the Holy Ghost did ordain, by institution, pastors and teachers, and set them as overseers over each flock, as an whole flock, Acts xx. 28; therefore ordained the bounds of their flocks too.

Again, the seven churches are seven candlesticks, whereof the type was the candlestick of God, made by God's appointment. In the candlestick there were two things: 1. Matter, which was gold, that they should be saints; 2. Form, which is therefore Christ's institution, to be cast into such or such a mould. And for one candlestick then, there are many candlesticks now. Seven in Rev. i. 20. And the form of these many are now as well from Christ as the form of that one then was.

And as it is God's house, he hath not left it unto man to frame his building to what proportion he pleaseth; Christ's body instituted (which is resembled unto the natural body throughout the epistles), is to have set limits of it, a *maximum quod sit;* and as the natural body, if it have all the parts that can have communion natural in the same common acts of nature together, though it be never so small, is a perfect body, so it hath also a prescription of bigness, and bounds are set it, both for parts and a *maximum quod sit*, for proportion of stature, which none should exceed. Thus Christ hath also constituted his body the church, in a due measure and proportion.

But to make a distinct demonstration, that the form and order of congregational churches is of Christ's institution, I shall proceed in this method.

1. I shall prove that God hath not left the government of his church to be ordered by the laws of nature, or the arbitrary maxims of human reason, but hath prescribed rules for it by his own institution.

2. I shall shew what is the nature of a divine institution.

3. I shall describe the ways whereby Christ hath derived his institutions to us, to ascertain us that they are genuinely his own.

4. I shall demonstrate the order, and worship, and ordinances of the churches of Christ, to be of a perpetual continuance.

5. I shall prove that excommunication, being more than non-communion or casting out of the church, hath in it a superadded institution of Christ.

6. I shall at last shew that a congregational church is, by Christ's institution, the only subject and seat of church government, and the grand charter of the power of the keys is granted to it alone.

1. To prove that Christ hath not left his churches destitute of rules for

her government, but hath established them in his divine word of the Scriptures, I shall lay down and demonstrate these followlng propositions.

Prop. I. That the right government of a church is a part of worship under the New Testament; which is evident,

1. Because all means of worship are called the keys of heaven. Mat. xvi. 18, 19; and by excommunication men bind and loose, as well as by preaching or by praying. 2. This act of government, excommunication, is paralleled with prayer; the agreement of the church to cast out is paralleled with this, What two shall agree to ask, Mat. xviii. 19. 3. Excommunication is done in the name of Christ and in the power of Christ, which is the same thing that makes baptism a part of worship. 'Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' Mat. xxviii. 19. So as the Lord's supper also is constituted. 4. In Rom. xii. all is called λογικὴ λατρεία, reasonable worship, which referreth to ruling afterward, as well as teaching and exhorting. And 5. If a contribution to uphold the ministry, and giving to poor Christians, be called a sacrifice, and a service done unto God, 2 Cor. ix. 12 (the word is λειτουργία), then church censures also as well may have that name, and therefore must have a rule for them as well as other parts of worship. And therefore now to determine as who shall baptize, and who shall administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper, depends upon his having a power to do it, so to determine who shall excommunicate, there is some rule to direct us.

Prop. II. The law of nature is not sufficient to set up any thing which is parallel to a divine institution.

As for example, if the government of congregations by elders and officers be in a particular congregation set up by divine institution, no law of nature alone will be ground enough to erect the like power in any other company of elders, if they have not that other by institution. The laws of nature may indeed direct us how to manage ordinances that Christ hath erected, according to the common nature in which those ordinances partake with other things civil. As if that there be many prophets in a church, the law of nature will teach that they should not speak many at once, because it is against the end of prophesying; but the laws of nature would not be sufficient to erect an order of prophecy in the church, which Jesus Christ hath not appointed, although speech is a natural means to persuade by. The laws of nature will also teach us to take the benefit of ordinances, if they be instituted by Christ. As supposing that Christ had appointed a superior power, a superior court over churches, having the same power which the churches have, the laws of nature would have taught me to have made use of this, but would never have warranted the erection of such, armed with the same power, if Jesus Christ should not be found to have appointed it. The proposition is evident by these reasons:

1. Because that institutions and ordinances flow from Christ, not as the author of nature, but as the author of grace, as Lord and King of his church, and so depend upon his will. If therefore he by his will have made one institution, the laws of nature cannot make a parallel to it; and parallel it is if it be supposed to have the same power and influence that the other hath which Christ hath instituted.

2. Nothing can work beyond its own sphere; and therefore, though the laws of nature may be sanctified to subserve the institutions of Christ, yet not to raise up anything anew parallel to an institution of Christ. A spiritual court parallel to such a spiritual court as Christ hath instituted, is what exceedeth the power of nature, as truly as that it is not in the power of nature to produce a spiritual act of grace parallel to what the Holy Ghost produceth.

Natural gifts and natural parts may be subservient unto grace that sanctifieth them, but they cannot produce or educe the least spiritual act. And thus Christ's government excludeth not nature, but will take in the help of it, but exceeding it; nature cannot be the rise of any part of it.

Prop. III. That there must be a special divine institution for the government of the churches of Christ.

For all church power and government which hath a spiritual punishment annexed to it, must be by special institution; and that is in a special manner government, by a divine institution, which hath a power annexed to it, to inflict a spiritual punishment, beyond what is in the common nature of the act itself to do. And therefore, although to withdraw from every brother that walketh inordinately, be from the common law of Christianity, in all sorts of arbitrary converse; yea, and to throw out of a fixed body or society, to have power to do so, be from the common and ordinary nature of all other societies, if the laws of those societies be so and so transgressed; yet that there should be a delivering over to Satan with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, that this should be annexed to the casting of a man out, this is apparently by special institution, for no body of men by the common law of nature could have power so to do. So also although upon all admonitions there is a binding the sin upon the conscience so far forth as the nature of the sin is laid upon it, which is common to all other reproofs of any kind in other sorts, yet that there should be a promise that where such and such, rather than others, do bind sin upon a man's conscience on earth by their sentence and judgment, this sin is also bound upon them in heaven, Mat. xviii. 18, this must be from an institution superadded. Whether Christ's will that this should be done by such and such be apparent to us by an express command in the letter of it, or is held forth in some example or some promise which do imply it, yet it is an institution, because it holds forth a supernatural efficacy. For whatsoever is set apart by God electively, and culled out from other things to be the instrument of a supernatural power and efficacy, that is such by divine institution; and all such power as is thus supernatural, must be disposed of and executed according to his mind, by his own instruments, and where he hath placed it. Every man is to admonish his brother upon that common ground, that he is to love him and not to hate him; this is a common ground belonging to all sorts of men whatsoever; but that any select company of men should be peculiarly singled out to have power to admonish a man, to bind sin upon him, this is from the institution of Christ. And that they should have the promise of the power of Jesus Christ to accompany them; that this should be in order to a throwing the sinner out, and a delivering him up to Satan if he repent not, this is from Christ's institution. Thus God doth take things, that by the common law of Christianity do serve for such an end, and yet over and above puts an institution upon them to serve for some special end, in such a way, by such and such persons; as in those instances given of reproving and admonishing by any Christian which serveth to a spiritual end, he takes it up to be performed in a church and by elders in public in a more special manner, to have a further efficacy in it, because he hath put a further institution upon it. Thus also the gifts out of which men preach and pray, they are common to multitudes of men, and are given in a providential way, and not by institution; but that men should exercise these by way of office, in a constant, selected way, and separated hereunto, this is by special institution. So likewise God doth take such things as have a ground in the law of nature, and over and above stamps his institution upon them in a supernatural way further than naturally they serve to; so that Christ's institutions

they do not exclude natural grounds, but comply with them, only elevate them, cause them to exceed their natural power and force with a peculiar efficacy and blessing, and so fall in with the rules of nature. Thus that not two or three should speak at once in a church, it is in itself a law of nature common to all men; that women should not speak in public, but be silent, it is the law of nature; yet over and above they are delivered as the commands of God, which he that is spiritual acknowledgeth, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xiv. It is the law of nature, that no man should war upon his own charges, that the labourer is worthy of his hire, &c., and the apostle allegeth these for ministers' maintenance, 1 Cor. ix. 7, and yet withal addeth, so I ordain in all the churches, and makes an institution of it. And for the due companies of men to meet and assemble themselves together, and no more to assemble than can meet in one place to be edified by ordinances, agrees with that law of nature that is common to it as to other things. But yet this, which had but a natural and moral foundation, hath Jesus Christ now made an institution of, and hath therefore put his own name upon it, and called it, a gathering together in his name, and he hath enabled them with a power beyond the power of nature in the throwing of a man out, for it is to give him up to Satan.

So also in the judging of a man for having committed a sin there is always a kind of censure. In a large sense indeed, *vita est censura*, and thus a man condemns and censures another by his practice and example, and so a godly man doth judge wicked men, and they are reproved and judged by all the saints. But there is also a special judicature out of authority, and the power of Jesus Christ accompanying of it, namely, that spoken of in 1 Cor. v. 12, when he saith, 'Do not ye judge those that are within? What have I to do to judge them that are without?' therefore, this is by special institution. And in this place of the Corinths, compared with chap vi., this differing way of judgment, one by way of institution, and the other by way of the common law of nature, seems to be held forth by the apostle himself; for when he comes to speak of judging the incestuous person for his sin, with a spiritual power, the power of the Lord Jesus, he makes that a settled government, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' as they were a body to Christ. But when, in chap. vi., he speaks of taking up differences about things of this life, though he would have the saints do it among themselves by way of arbitration, and not to carry it out of themselves (for the sake of avoiding scandal) to heathen magistrates; yet this latter he doth found only on the common law; it is not an ordinance, though it was Christ's will and command it should be in that case. Therefore he doth not bid them go to the elders to take up differences, or to the whole church, but he bids them take whom they would, the least saint, who is able to judge upon that common ground of ability, whereby one day they shall be able to judge the world. So that this latter was only occasional, and by way of arbitration, according to the law of nature; whereas the other was a constant and settled government, and that invested with spiritual power supernatural, which the other is not.

All the duties that are performed in a church, they are duties amongst all Christians by the common law of Christianity; for by the law of love they are to instruct, to pray for, to reprove, to avoid, &c., as occasion is. But that all these should be performed in a public body of saints, gathered together, not occasionally but fixedly, and that special persons should have the power or part of the power committed to them, separated thereunto, and that it should be done in such and such an order; all this both because of the constancy of it, of the electiveness of it, and the special power and effi-

cacy that doth accompany it, over and above what is promised in an ordinary way to the common law of Christianity, must needs be an institution.

So that whatsoever be the subject or the instrument in a constant and elective way of a supernatural power, or a supernatural administration, over and above what is common to all Christians, or societies of men, that power must be placed by institution, whoever hath it, or wherever it is. It is not a supernatural quality indeed, but it is a relative respect, whereby a company of men are called by God, and enabled unto a supernatural administration, which a special efficacy shall accompany; and so by virtue of God's promise it is concomitantly a supernatural power, though not inherent.

And yet it is not so to be understood as if that such a power should always, for the effect, have that efficacy that it is assigned to, for that is as God pleaseth. He works not as natural agents do, because God's promise to accompany his ordinances is in a free way; as in preaching the word, though it is an ordinance, yet it had not always the effect, though Christ himself and the apostles preached it. It might always have an issue indeed one way or other, and be a means to condemn men, because they receive it not; but it had not always that effect, for which it was more principally and directly appointed, as natural agents have.

And so on the other side, we deny not but that admonitions and other means which run according to the law of the new creature and Christianity, which one saint is to perform to another, may have the like effects, through God's dispensation, that excommunication hath, to bind sin upon a man's conscience, give him up to Satan to terrify him, and the like; even as God also may bless private instructions, yea, the private example of a private Christian, to convert an heathen; yea, and that also when his own ordinance will not do it, 1 Peter ii. 12. But yet still church admonition and excommunication is an ordinance in a special manner, which the other is not. So as because that God's power supernaturally must concur for the effecting of what it is ordained for; hence, therefore, it must be seated where God would have it be, by a special institution, and not misplaced, or else he will not work in it and with it. If a man had stirred the waters, God would not have wrought; or if Satan had done it, he would not have wrought; but when the angel did it, he did, John v. 4. All such supernatural administrations they are limited. As the power is from God, so in whom this power should be is also from him and by his appointment. Though magistrates are the ordinance of God in this general respect, that it is his will and command that there should be magistrates, yet the power that God accompanieth magistrates withal in their administration, is not supernatural to those ends for which they are appointed, farther than in this proportion, as in general he hath appointed magistrates to be his vicegerents. And hence, therefore, what sort of magistrates to have, whether monarchial or aristocratical, of what extent their dominions shall be, and the like, is still left to men, because the power that the magistrate hath of any kind, it is indeed executively but the power of the people committed to him and betrusted to him, whose power he acts, so as what he pardons the people pardon, what he punisheth the people punish: the people's power is engaged in it; and hence as Solomon saith, in the word of a king there is power, Eccles. viii. 4. Hence they are called human creations, though an ordinance of God, 1 Peter ii. 3, Rom. xiii. 1. But that supernatural ecclesiastical power that Jesus Christ doth appoint is not simply an ordinance that there should be ministers in the general that shall have this or that power, leaving it unto men to appoint what sort of ministers, whether in a way of monarchy or in a way of aristocracy, whether popes or bishops, &c. And so likewise as to the seat or relation over which

these officers shall have power, and the extent of it. But these must be all divine creations and institutions, as the sort of magistrates and extent of commonwealths is a human creation. If the power that these did manage were immediately the power of men, or given to them by the church as that of magistrates is by the commonwealth, then indeed the several administrations might be appointed by men, and the bounds thereof set forth, for the power they have would be proportioned to the cause or rise of it. Magistrates, as they have their power thus from men by human creation, so the punishments that they inflict are but corporal punishments which the people that set them up can inflict. Indeed, rebellion against the lawful magistrate works damnation in the issue by consequence, because it is a sin against the general ordinance of God; but yet it is but as any other sin brings damnation. But now in church power there is a special supernatural efficacy of God immediately accompanying it; and therefore this power, as it can no way be delegated by the person or persons that have it, so as they should make any one vicars or substitutes to execute it for them, as the bishops do the chancellors, so also by the same ground it cannot be placed or seated but where Christ would have it by his commission. For if the persons that already have it from Christ cannot give it unto another than to whom Christ hath appointed, or to any other body or society than Christ hath appointed, and hath by institution placed it, then assuredly neither magistrates nor any company of men whatsoever can place it but where he would have it.

And surely for excommunication, of all other (if for any other ordinance) there must be an institution, and by whom it shall be administered in a certain way defined, because of all ordinances it is the greatest. If, therefore, for preaching, who shall administer it, and where, there is an institution, then certainly for this, for this is an act of mere authority. To preach is an act of gift also, and he that hath gifts may, for the materiality of preaching, perform all that a minister doth out of gifts; but the act of delivering to Satan, and the act of throwing a man out, are acts of mere power; do cast him out of all ordinances, and therefore of all ordinances they are the greatest; and besides that, it is delivering to Satan with the power of Christ, which who can assume but those to whom Christ hath committed it? It is to a spiritual end, and it is not therefore enough to say that if there be nothing in the word against it, but that these and these may excommunicate, that then they may do it; no, there must be something in the word positive for it, and that limiteth it, and here placeth it. It will otherwise be a nullity for want of commission in the persons that do it.

And if that excommunication were not so an institution as that also the sort of persons to whom it is to be performed should be by institution, and were not a delivering up to Satan also, then the magistrate could inflict it as well as the ministers of the church, for he can cast men out of such and such a society, and keep men from ordinances, as well as they.

Hence excommunication being an ordinance depending wholly upon institution, and that which makes ecclesiastical authority to be properly government and jurisdiction, lying in a power so to excommunicate, none may therefore take upon them to administer this ordinance without a special commission and institution; and in this lies the knot of the difference in the controversy.

Prop. IV. God's institution must put an efficacy into all censures.

Nothing in nature hath further perfection in it than God hath put into it; therefore much more this holds in power ecclesiastical. Man cannot limit that power of ministry which he cannot give. All church censures, they are accompanied with a supernatural power, as the word of God is, which

hath not in itself a power inherent to work without the Spirit accompany it. There is this difference between civil power and ecclesiastical; that though God's power doth accompany the civil power of the magistrate because it is his ordinance, yet he doth not accompany the acts thereof supernaturally, but the power that accompanieth the magistrate's acts is the power of the people in whose name magistrates execute it; and, therefore, if the magistrates be resisted, the whole people are obliged to back and strengthen him. But here now the ministerial power is ordained to convey a special supernatural efficacy from God, and ministers do work wholly in his power: 'The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, having in us a readiness to revenge all disobedience,' 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 6. As, therefore, if the powers of a kingdom are engaged in the sentence of any court, it must be because they have set it up and confined it, and given commission, and appointed who should execute it, so as if any should exercise a power further than they have appointed, they were not engaged to back it: so nor will God also assist with his power further than as he hath placed it, and where he hath placed it.

Prop. V. That the constitution of churches is uniform, and of one kind and sort.

All churches are of a like sort, and, for their constitution and government, are uniform;

Or else, 1, there should be a double constitution, one for the one sort, and the other for the other, and therefore a classical and congregational church, being two several sorts of churches in respect of their end, the one being for worship, the other for government; the one a representative church (for so the elders in a *classis* are), the other of the people, or consisting of people and elders both; and being also truly several forms of churches in respect of government, as economical government differs from political and the like, they cannot both of them be by divine institution.

Object. In the Jewish government both small towns and great had entire power.

Ans. Therefore, therein lay their uniformity; and whilst power was lodged only in the elders, and they kept court in the gate, it might be so, and the same order be preserved; but it cannot be so here, when the people also are by institution taken in, and are to be present.

2. When the apostle saith, 'So I ordain in all the churches,' 1 Cor. vii. 17, there could not be the same ordination of government and constitution unless there were an uniformity in these churches.

3. Again, Christ writing to the churches of Asia in Rev. ii. and iii., he not only calls them seven candlesticks, as being of the same make, uniform, of the same parts, and the like; but what he writes to one, he writes to all that were churches, concluding all his epistles thus, 'Hear what the Spirit saith to the churches,' which is all one with what is in Rev. xxii. 16, 'I sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches.'

4. And it is argued from that common type of the visible churches, which is shewn unto John, Rev. iv., as the form of the tabernacle was shewn unto Moses in the mount, where there are twenty-four elders, and four beasts, and the acts they do perform are principally worship, and therefore it is the form of congregational churches.*

5. Of Thessalonica he saith, 1 Thes. ii. 14, 'That they became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.' If it had been meant only of following of them in matters of faith, in receiving of the gospel in the doctrine of it, as every particular Christian doth, he needed not have used the phrase, 'followers of the churches,' but of the church in

* Parkerus de Polit. Eccles. lib. iii.

Judea, if it had been spoken in respect as they were members of the visible church, visible professors of Christianity. He speaks it therefore, also, in reference to having received the gospel, and casting themselves, as a church, into the same form and constitution with those churches; for by reason of their form and constitution they are called churches, as they are bodies gathered up for worship and government.

6. For the confirmation of this, add that the institution cannot fall both upon congregational and classical; but one would destroy the other if it were left arbitrary to take one or the other.

7. As one baptism, one body, one faith, are in the church mystical, so one sort of body, as well as one baptism for kind, is instituted in the constitution of the churches of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

That Christ hath, by his own institution, established the order, discipline, and government of his churches, proved by several arguments.

As there is a distinction commonly made between discipline, and worship, and doctrine of the church, so such a distinction hath an apostolical stamp upon it for its warrant; for materially we find it, though in other terms, Col. ii. 5, where by *order* among them he means that which we call discipline, or ordering the administration or government of the church and worship; and by *faith*, that which we call doctrine, or the system of truths to be believed and practised, for so everywhere the word is used. And so in 1 Cor. xi. 34, having treated of matters pertaining to worship and discipline, the administration of the Lord's supper, &c., he concludes, 'The rest will I set in order when I come.' So 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 'Let all be done decently,' which respects the outward circumstances, 'and according to order,' which respects those apostolical commands about matters of discipline and ordering, as he calls them, ver. 37, such as he had given in that chapter and at other times. Therefore, Titus i. 5, when writing to an evangelist about rectifying matters in Crete, and ordaining elders in every city, matters that concern discipline, he adds, 'as I had ordered thee, or given order to thee.' The word is the same in all these places. And by order, he means not simply their having all those principally instituted ordinances as are essential, as preaching the word, sacrament, and censure, and officers to administer these; but all such rules as the apostles gave for the ordering and administering those ordinances right, many of which rules are more than mere external circumstances, and yet not principal ordinances, but directions to manage ordinances, as even those directions given about prophesying in that 1 Cor. xiv., that they should speak by course, and one at once, that the women should keep silence, &c., which yet are points of that order he would have them observe in their assemblies, ver. 40. And so in the Old Testament there was the like usage. As they had the ark, so they had direction how to carry it, 1 Chr. xv. 2; none ought to carry the ark but the Levites, for them hath the Lord chosen; and because they carried it in a cart, he tells them they sought not the Lord after the due order, ver. 13. Now for the demonstration of this, that the order of the churches of Christ is to be distinguished from their doctrine and worship;—

1. Consider, that very place itself even now cited for this distinction, doth, if viewed in the context of it, afford argument for this, the apostle delighting himself with a rare and worthy sight, worthy an apostle's joy: Col. ii. 5, 'Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I present with you in the spirit,

joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.' Where by *spirit*, if his own mind and heart be meant, then the meaning is, that both those were established according to his own heart, as he an apostle led by the Holy Ghost would have them; therefore he says he was present with them in his spirit. Or if the Holy Ghost be meant more immediately, then the meaning is, that in respect of those, the same Spirit of Christ that dwelt in the apostle, and guided him in settling the church in both these, was present also with them in both faith and order, both being established and settled among them according to the dictates of the Holy Ghost in the apostle; and therefore he says, he was present with them in the Spirit, joying in a spiritual manner to behold both. So that the Colossians had all ordinances and officers, and all those ordinances managed by those officers amongst them, according to the directions the Holy Ghost had given. This was their order he rejoiceth in, as well as in their faith, and is in respect of both these present with them in spirit. And this being their present state in both, he exhorts them to continue therein, in those words, 'As ye therefore have received Christ the Lord, so walk ye in him,' ver. 6. He speaks in relation to both these, for his scope is to exhort them to persevere in what he had before commended them for, which hitherto they had held on in; which was for their order, as well as faith, which the particle *therefore* implies, 'as ye have therefore received, so walk.' And as in their faith they had received Christ Jesus for their Saviour, so in submitting to his orders and rules for their church government, they had received him for their Lord; and to walk on in both as they had begun, he exhorts them. So that all churches, then, as they had received from the apostles the doctrine of faith, so directions for order too, and it was not left to their power, to their arbitrament, to innovate or alter in either, but to continue to walk as they had begun.

And this further appears to have been his scope, because he prefaceth this commendation of their faith and order, that he might preserve them from the errors of some who went about to pervert them in both. Into the order of their worship there were those that would have obtruded Jewish rites and ceremonies, of abstinence from meats, and of holy days, and the Jewish Sabbath, ver. 16, and so a seeking God after the old order of the Jewish church. And into the doctrine of their faith there were some that would have introduced things they had not seen, ver. 18, by which doctrines they destroyed the foundation of their faith, not holding the head, ver. 19. Now, to settle them against these innovations, both in doctrine and rites, and against all whatsoever that might arise of the like kind, to the end of the world, he tells them that they were, in respect of that order and faith they had received Christ in, in him complete, ver. 10. He and his word was a sufficient director to them in both, and they needed neither to be beholden to human philosophy or policy, or any traditions of men, either to order their churches for them, otherwise than as Christ by his apostles had taught, or to coin new doctrines, ver. 8. And because that, take them *quâ colentes*, as worshippers in a church, they were dead with Christ from all rudiments of the world whatever, ver. 20, he wonders that any among them should be so seduced, and why as though living in the world they would be subject to ordinances human of what kind soever. Where he takes away the fairest pretence for such innovations as could be, that they, because men as well as others, lived in the world (the example of which is apt to mould men much to conform to their practices), and therefore they should take liberty to loose their orders in their church affairs, to come the nearer to the model of worldly governments. Ay, but the apostle tells them that they

were worshippers in a church that held of Christ as their only Lord, they were of another world, and so ought not to subject themselves to any matters of order, as well as matters of faith in their church administrations, but what were purely from Christ. And in relation to both these (which he still carries in his eye), he useth two words, ver. 22, not to go after the commandments of men in matters of order, nor the doctrines of men in matters of faith (for still such new invented ways profit not the soul, but perish in the using), nor be deceived by the vain show of what wisdom soever appeared in either. And although the swervings and aberrations there mentioned from right order and faith were more gross than many of those amongst us, yet the arguments and exhortations the apostle useth (to prevent any of what sort soever for ever) are such as reach ours, and all other digressions from the right order and faith at first delivered by the apostle, and received by the apostolic churches; and we are to reduce all to the word, we being complete in Christ for either. The like exhortation unto this (which further strengtheneth this) we have also Rom. xii. 1.

2. I add to this, that there are in the books of the New Testament, written by the apostles, manifold particular directions and notes, purposely and professedly written to direct in the government of churches, and ordering the worship of them. Thus in the book of the Acts, which is an historical narration, and in the Epistles, there are divers and several passages scattered, which put together will rise up to a platform; whereas for ordering of commonwealths there are only general rules, as to be subject to the higher powers, &c., but neither directions nor examples left or intimated how they are to be governed. Thus in 1 Tim. ii. he gives many directions about the public prayers of the church, as for their order, that they should be first made afore any other, that 'first of all prayers be made,' ver. 1. So for their kind, all sorts of prayers; supplications, prayers, intercessions, &c. For their subject, for all men, kings, all in authority; for the places of worship, not in places dedicated as holy with difference from others, as the temple was, but 'I will that prayers be made everywhere,' &c, ver. 8. For the carriage of women, that in the public assemblies they wear modest apparel, and not affect that splendour and costliness as elsewhere, ver. 9; and that they keep silence in all administrations whatever, ver. 10; and that they be not rulers nor teachers of the church, ver. 11. Then in chap. iii. he gives directions about officers; their distinction, bishops and deacons; their qualifications, when to be chosen. And chap. v., he adds many more of the like nature, both about officers and church censures. And what was the scope of all this? Even to shew that the ordering and disposing of all such things are fixed somewhere or other in the writings of the apostles, and left as rules for us by apostolic authority. He accordingly, in the conclusion of all this, doth more strongly enforce his former directions: 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 'These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly (and so not writing all that might be written now). But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.' He puts an emphasis upon the subject he was to converse in, 'the house of God, and the church of the living God;' as if he had said, the house or family of God, and the ordering of it, requires another manner of skill than the societies of men. Timothy was an evangelist, whose office it was to perfect discipline and doctrine in the churches, which the apostles first planted; and the evangelists received extraordinary gifts to that end, and such gifts as made them to exceed, in spiritual wisdom and spirit, all the bishops, yea, all the states in the world; and yet it was not

left unto their wisdom or arbitrament, to dispose or give such directions as these in church affairs and administrations; but they were tied to the directions of the apostles, under whom they were evangelists, and who were guided infallibly by the Spirit, that these evangelists might be guided by them to mould churches accordingly. Timothy's wisdom could not direct him herein, but he was to learn and know from Paul, 'That thou mayest know how to behave thyself,' &c., 1 Tim. iii. 15. This is a skill then which depends upon apostolical revelation. And the directions were not so loosely given as they might vary from them, for Paul says even to Timothy, 'how thou oughtest to behave thyself,' as a matter of duty. Neither doth Paul only give general rules, which might help human wisdom in the ordinance of things, for many of the rules in that epistle are particular, and as express as may be, not only directing to the substantial parts of worship, but giving directions for the manner, as the word πῶς, *how*, implies. Yea, and he makes these things part of that mystery of godliness, ver. 16, for which Christ was made manifest in the flesh, and ascended, as well as matters of doctrine; and so they needed a revelation as well as the greatest truths of faith. And further, he insinuates the reason why he left these things in writing, because the Spirit foretold that there should be an apostasy of the churches to popery in the latter times; when there should be a perversion, as of the doctrine, so of the apostolical order and worship set up in the first churches, he instancing in some particulars for the rest, 1 Tim. iv. 1, which Daniel (whence he quotes it) instanceth in, Dan. xi. 36, 39. And so he writ these things, that the church might in after ages have a rule to restore all things to the primitive condition again.

The like we have delivered by Paul to Titus, another evangelist: Tit. i. 5, 'For this cause (says he) left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting;' or, as the word in the original is, ἐπιδιορθώσῃ, thoroughly set straight, or reduce to the right, things that were left unset right. And he instanceth in one matter of discipline for all the rest, 'and ordain elders in every city.' And how was he to order all things, and by what rule? ὡς ἐγώ σοι διεταξάμην, as I ordered them to thee, or gave order. Evangelists were appointed for church discipline, as well as doctrine; so Timothy you see was by the directions given him, and so Titus was, as appears by the following directions, and as the word διατάττω implies, for that signifies the ordering of matters aright. And he was to make an exact or thorough reformation, and to constitute things fully aright; and all this not according to rules of general wisdom and discretion, but according to particular and express order from the apostle, 'as I gave order to thee.' Now if the apostle gave particular orders for all these things then, and that to abler and wiser men than ever were to succeed in the church, and they needed them; then if they have not left in their writings somewhere or other all the directions they gave to them by word of mouth, there had not been sufficient provision made for us in these days, nor the succeeding churches in all ages, who know less how to behave ourselves in the church of God than they did.

3. Add to this that so usually cited place, Heb. iii. 1–3, which comes fitly in to second this reason, and confirms it. As Moses is said to be faithful in all God's house, so Christ also both in God's and his own house; as Moses was under the Old Testament, so Christ is under the New; Moses was concerned in that old visible constituted church of the Jews (for so also, Acts vii. 38, it is called the church in the wilderness), and Christ in the new constituted assemblies of the gospel. Even in the language of that Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as in this to Timothy, these particular assemblies

are called, with respect to Christ, his house, for, Heb. x. 21, the apostle there shewing that, as we have an high priest now as they had then, so an house of God now as then; 'We having an high priest over the house of God;' he infers from thence, that as we should draw near in worship as the priests did, having our consciences sprinkled, and our bodies washed with pure water (following the allusion of the worship in that old house), so we should go on with other duties of church fellowship; as inferences from thence, and among others, he brings in this last, 'not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.'* And his argument lies thus: as there was an high priest then, so now; as a public worship then, so now; and as an house of God, and assemblies then to exercise public worship in, over which the high priest was placed, so there must be such an house now; which, because they are not national, but parochial, therefore he expresseth them by the synagogues of the Jews. Now if such congregations be God's house appointed for his public worship under the New Testament, we needed particular directions how to behave ourselves in this house of God, as much as the Jews of old did in that house which God built them for public worship; as that place in Timothy shews, 'That thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God,' 1 Tim. iii. 15. Yea, and Christ also hath been as faithful to God in directing us now, as Moses was in ordering all things then, as this place in the Epistle to the Hebrews shews. Moses was faithful, as in giving a right platform of doctrine to that church, both of the law and gospel; so in giving a perfect platform of discipline of the government of that church, and ordaining all things in the worship of it ('He made all things according to the pattern in the mount,' Exod. xxv. 40, Heb. viii. 5), therefore, so hath Christ done also. Faithfulness implies going exactly according to directions given, and Christ his faithfulness lay in giving out those directions to us his church. Neither is it only in matters of faith and manners; for it is spoken of building God's house under the New Testament, which is done by ministry, and the government of the church also, as well as by faith and manners; for the building and edification of the church is as well by the ministry and officers of the church, Eph. iv. 12, and all the ordinances of it, 2 Cor. x. 4–6, as by the doctrine of faith and good manners. Neither is the comparison of Christ with Moses, as to giving rules for a commonwealth (and so this needs not be brought in for a disproportion), but as to the house of God only, in which Christ only did meddle, and refused to be a judge in other things. And herein, as Moses is said to be faithful, Ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ, in the whole house; that is, in every particular about it, a complete director of all things, in every room of it; so must Christ be also in all sorts of things, that concerned it any way as an house to God, whether as mystical, in giving doctrines to build it, or visible and constituted, in giving discipline. He was faithful to God in the whole house; that is, in everything wherein we are an house to God. Neither do we fetch an argument from the particulars of Christ and Moses; but further, from the very reasons that the apostle here suggests. For,

1. In reason says the apostle, 'Every house is built by some man,' Heb. iii. 4. And for the building of it, there must be a platform, and direction in some man's head. A pattern there was for the tabernacle, and for Solomon's temple given by David, and that by the Spirit, as is warily put in, 1 Chron. xxviii. 12–14, and the faithfulness of him that is to build this house must lie in building it according to that pattern. Now this house of God, neither under the Old nor New Testament, could have man for its builder; for no man hath either power to do it, nor skill to give the

* Μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, Heb. x. 25.

pattern; therefore, ver. 3, he says, that Moses, and all the saints of the Old and New Testament, apostles and others, were, and are but a part of the house, and so could not give of themselves directions to build it. Therefore, as it is the house of God (both now and then), so God must be the master-builder, as then so now; therefore, ver. 3, he both calleth Christ the builder of his house, in those words, 'he that built the house'; and adds, ver. 4, that whereas men build every other house, he that built this house is God, 'but he that built all things is God.' Men love to have the contrivance of their houses to be drawn by themselves, and are as curious in it to please themselves, as in any other thing; and so Christ likewise.

2. To build and give directions for the building of God's church, as unto Moses was given, he makes a matter of honour and prerogative due only to God and Christ, and shall man arrogate it? Ver. 3, 'This man (meaning Christ) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses was, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.' Under the word building, he includes giving the pattern, for Moses was but faithful in doing then according to the master builder's direction. Therefore, to give but such kind of directions for the building and ordering God's house under the New Testament, as Moses by direction gave under the Old, about church officers, &c., if men should undertake it, would be to assume the glory of that wisdom that is due only to Christ. It was the masterpiece wherein Solomon's wisdom (Christ's type) is said to have been shewn: 2 Chron. ix. 3–5, 'When the Queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, the meat of his table, attendance of his servants, and so the rest of the ordering of his house, she professeth she had not heard the one half of the greatness of his wisdom.' And certainly in God's house, which he hath built for his glory, much more of his wisdom is expected. And if God, who built that old house of the Jewish church, shewed his own wisdom in the exact particular directions about it, surely in this new house of the New Testament, which in true glory is to exceed that other, and which is built for the glory of his wisdom, as well as the former, he hath displayed the like, or else he hath imparted the honour to men under the gospel in the framing this better house, which he accounted part of his glory, and so reserved it to himself under the Old.

So that, to sum up this, the apostle doth here at once exclude both men's hands and skill from the building of any of God's house, both because it is God's house, and themselves but part of this house. And is it not as absurd for all men and angels to take on them to direct (otherwise than by direction first given) how any of God's house should be made and built, as it were for any part of the house to give order for the rest? It is as much as for the clay to say to the potter, Why hast thou made me thus? Is it fit for the whole house, or any part of it, to say, Make me this house thus? Who shall give Christ a pattern of any house he hath promised to dwell in? Who hath been his counsellor? Men love to have the contriving their houses themselves, and are as curious in it to please themselves, as in any other thing; so is Christ. And the apostle withal expressly affirmeth, on the contrary, that all things in this house are to be built by God, for so I understand τὰ πάντα, he that built *all these things* is God, all those things that belong to this house, which was the thing he was speaking of. So as Christ, not as a servant as Moses was, but as being God, built this house, and all things in it, and yet according to a pattern, in respect of which he is said to be faithful.

We shall annex to these scriptures but one reason for the confirmation hereof, which is this, that if the Scripture hath condescended to set down a

multitude of particular directions, either in examples, or in more express rules, about the ordering of government and worship, whereof some are in appearance of but small importance, and might seem to be left to discretion (as that every man should lay aside, as God hath blessed him, on the first day of the week, rather than on another day, &c., 1 Cor. xvi. 2), that then the word hath left a full and complete direction, as to matters of greater importance. The strength of the consequence, viz., that if the New Testament hath given particular directions for many things, then for all of like nature, appears by this.

1. Because the word of God is perfect in whatever it meddles with. If it had not meddled at all with church matters, but only given in general rules, then indeed no complete pattern could have been pleaded for; but having, to our view, set out so many pieces of this building, for any man to say, Christ hath left other things of like nature and use unto general rule, is to argue the Scriptures to be guilty of imperfection, whereas Paul writing to Timothy an evangelist, about matters of church government (which was one main part of an evangelist's office, and one main argument of his epistles to him before), says, the word of God was given to make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. iii. 17.

2. A divine wisdom of God being manifest in these directions in view thus given, which man's wisdom in the like must not presume to imitate or come near, if God should have given some directions, and left to man's wisdom other of the same kind and use, in this man's wisdom had been made equal to God's, in matters of this nature.

3. Those many directions and appointments God hath given, have a supernatural efficacy and blessing in them, because they are his institutions over and above what is in the dictates of nature, or what reason can invent. Now if it were left to man to add the like out of his own wisdom, to the like uses in the government of the church, then man must be supposed to have the power or promise from God, to have his ordinances accompanied with the like supernatural efficacy. All God's institutions have for their object, men's souls and consciences; so the dispensers of ordinances, the ministers, and therefore likewise the things dispensed: 'Obey them that rule over you, for they watch for your souls,' Heb. xiii. 17. And then for their end, they are to be for the edification of men's souls, and to convey the Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 7, and therefore are wholly supernatural and spiritual. And the ministers, which are to be the means to effect those ends, should therefore not be left to the arbitration of natural reason or human wisdom, though never so much elevated, as the ordering of a family or commonwealth is, which have for their immediate object but men's bodies and estates, and for their immediate end but men's natural and civil good. But if the end of church ordinances be supernatural in an immediate way, then all the means should be supernatural also in their appointment and institution; for between the end and the means there must be a proportion, nothing being enabled to a spiritual effect that hath not a supernatural and spiritual original. We could not tell how to imagine or expect that God would accompany such media or means, of what kind or rank soever, as the wisdom of man invents, with such a power. And, therefore, the apostle speaking of all means spiritual (and by a metaphor calling these things weapons, which logicians call instruments or means), opposeth these two: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (or human), but mighty through God;' and by that negation insinuates, that they must be spiritual in their rise, if mighty in their working. It is as proper to the Holy Ghost to sanctify any thing to a spiritual end, as it is for God the Father to create,

or the Son to redeem; and, therefore, for man to appoint any thing to a spiritual end, is as derogatory to the Holy Ghost in his work, as the like would be to the other persons in theirs.

4. It was expressly forbidden for man to go about to make anything of his invention like unto God's, not like oil, not like days, not like-posts to God's; and, therefore, much more it is prohibited, that man should frame like institutions for the order and government of the churches under the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

What power spiritual or ecclesiastical is.—Of the nature of a divine institution. —How the knowledge of divine institutions is derived to us, that we may be assured what are truly and really such.

Power spiritual is an impress of, or an investiture with, the authority of Christ, merely out of his will, whereby men are authorised and enabled by commission from Christ, and in his name, to do that which others cannot do; and by virtue of which what they so do hath a special efficacy in it from the power of Christ, seconding and accompanying of it; which also the conscience acknowledging subjects itself to, as unto the power of Christ, for the sake of his will and institution.

An institution is that which is merely founded upon God's will, raising up a thing beyond its own natural or moral efficacy, with an efficacy beyond it. As for men to humble themselves is a moral duty; but that God should appoint and set apart a whole day for them to do it with fasting, and so have a blessing therefrom, this is beyond the nature of the thing, and is therefore an institution. The trumpets in the wars, they had a natural efficacy to encourage; but that the priests should blow trumpets when the people of Israel went to war, had a blessing beyond the natural efficacy of the thing; therefore those persons were appointed to do it. To hear the word, it is a duty we owe to God, as we are men, whomsoever he shall appoint to preach it to us, whether he should speak it himself or by others; but that he should appoint men rather than angels, or rather than speak himself, that he should single out some men for that office, and put a special efficacy upon them as sent by him, this is to raise up what hath a natural and common efficacy in it, beyond the nature of the thing; and as it dependeth merely upon his will, so it hath a special institution in it, because of a special efficacy accompanying it.

Institutions are not only express commands in the letter of them; for examples and promises, hints and implicit intimations, may hold forth the will of Christ. Neither is everything that is the will and command of Christ an institution; but it must be judged to be distinguished from other commands by the matter of it. If anything be taken out from the course of nature, from the course of God's providence, or from the common law of nature, and be peculiarly raised up above other things of its rank, to have a special force and efficacy in it; then if the will of Christ be declared concerning such a thing, it is peculiarly an institution, although other things be commanded as well as it. That bread and wine should signify and convey to us the body and blood of Christ, this is by special institution, because it is beyond the nature of the thing; it depends only upon God's will, to have chosen these elements to do it rather than others; and so they have a special efficacy in them. But to have the death of Christ set forth by way of

preaching, that is not an institution simply as such; but that there should a peculiar blessing go along with the apostles in preaching, or with evangelists, or with the ministers, this depends upon God's will, for he might have chosen others. A butcher or any man could have killed the sacrifices, as well as the priests, or any of the tribes of Israel could have done it; but God singles out the tribe of Levi, separates them to this work. To give alms to men as men, is the command of God: 'Do good unto all,' Gal. vi. 10; but this is not an institution, because founded also upon a common ground. To give alms to saints is founded also upon the like ground, analogous to the other, if to men as men, then especially to saints as saints; but to make collections in the church where God is worshipped, here it becometh a sacrifice; and then to make this collection upon the first day of the week rather than upon another, this must needs be an institution. So that oftentimes God doth take such things as are prescribed by the law of nature, and such things as are commanded upon other common grounds, and yet annexeth some special and peculiar stamp of his own will upon them, as they are done thus and thus, or by such and such. Hence is the distinction that our divines give upon the first and second commandment: that as there is *cultus naturalis* in them, as to fear God, and to love him, obey him, to hear his word, &c., so also there is *cultus institutus*, which is the substance of the second commandment. So also there are means of edification which are providential, and so occasionally will serve: if a man should walk in a churchyard and see a death's-head, it might put him in mind of death; but for a man to set up a death's-head in his study, continually to do it, this were the imitation of an institution. If a man went forth and heard a lark sing in this providential way, it might stir up his mind to think of God or heaven; or if a man hears music, it may do the like; but to keep a lark in cage on purpose, that when it sings my mind should be stirred up, or to have music on purpose to stir up the mind in a constant settled way, this were to make it as an institution, as in the temple it was, when music was there used. So as the constant setting apart of such a thing for such an end (though providentially and occasionally it may serve for such an end), riseth up to an institution also.

We come now to consider the ways whereby institutions are delivered unto us by Christ, or made known to us. Institutions are but the will of Christ, declared concerning such things as are exercised above the common nature of them, to a further spiritual end. Therefore the declaring the will of God about them, holds in common with the declaration of God's will in other commands. It doth differ only in the matter, that the matter of institutions are such things as are exercised above the common nature to some spiritual end and efficacy. In the delivery of these, Jesus Christ is as faithful as Moses was, though he hath not delivered them in the New Testament, in written Scripture, as in a body of laws formed up by themselves as Moses did; with express positive directions, by way of command, as the law of Moses is given. There is a double reason of it.

1. Because the Jews they needed much more express holdings forth of all their laws, because they were in the infancy of the church; therefore God dealt with them accordingly, in giving here a line, and there a line, and it was necessary to that state; and yet, even their system of laws is in many things obscure. There are many cases which the rabbins make in the interpretation of the ceremonial law, which have a great deal of difficulty in them.

2. But the chief reason is this: because (as was hinted afore) Moses his law was given to a church and nation formed up, and that by writing from

the first. But the apostles did not so; they delivered these rules to the churches by way of tradition, 1 Cor. xi. 1. They converted men by preaching, and formed up churches, and settled government and order amongst them, as well as faith. And it was the pleasure and mind of the Holy Ghost to leave to posterity those rules which the apostles expressly gave out to churches then by word of mouth, to leave them, I say, to posterity in writing, by hinting what practices were in churches, recorded in the Epistles and in the Acts; so as what was delivered to them in a way of command positively, is traduced to us by way of example, how churches were then governed.* Therefore, suitably the apostle saith, 'we have no such custom, nor the churches of God,' 1 Cor. xi. 16. And those customs of the churches were traduced and derived down to us; and unto this day, the *vestigia* of them all hath (though with superadditions and perversions) remained in the church of Rome; so as we have both the hints and practices of the primitive times, and also those footsteps remaining in the churches to this day.

1. Now, such institutions as those, they are sometimes delivered to us in promises, and we may gather them by the promises that are made to things above their natural efficacy. And when we find such promises, although we have it not in express letter, You shall do thus or thus; yet to such things as we find promises made, which are above the natural efficacy of them, we may warrantably argue their institution; as for the sentence the church shall give, the promise being, 'whose sins you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,' Mat. xviii. 18, John xx. 23, which is beyond the efficacy of the sentence of men upon earth, this evidently argueth a church, and their sentence, to be by institution. And so also when Christ saith, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20, this implies that the gathering together in his name is an institution, for there is a special promise of his being in the midst of them; and this being spoken upon occasion of his mentioning a church, is evidently, therefore, the institution of a church.

Obj. If you will make everything a promise is made to, to be an institution, we shall then have too many institutions.

Ans. We do not make everything a promise is made to an institution. Promises are made to the people of God, but institutions are in this case to be distinguished from all things else by the matter. However, promises are the declaration of God's will, be they made to what things soever; and if they fall upon such things as are raised up above natural and common efficacy, with promise of a supernatural power to accompany them, then they are institutions. If that promises be made to any action, as, to 'honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long,' &c., then that action is a duty, although there were no commandment for it, only it is not an institution, because there is not a supernatural spiritual efficacy put upon it. So, if promises be made to the people of God, the people of God be not an institution indeed, but it argues that they are the people of God: it doth separate them from the rest of the world; but if it falleth upon actions, or things, or persons raising them up to have a spiritual efficacy unto others above their natures, then it is an institution.

2. These institutions are sometimes declared by implicit directions, as when the apostle saith, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' 1 Cor. v. 12,

* It were a good project to add in every particular how that there is no particular that we stand for, but there is a vestigium of it left in some of those churches, and to give instances still all along of all the particulars, and so as to prove every one first by Scripture; 2, by consonancy to spiritual reason; and, 3, by the opinion of the reformed churches, &c.; so, 4, by the footsteps of them in all churches.

that is, Have not you power amongst you? It is but an implicit institution, but it holds forth that there had been an institution and commission of power given them; he takes it for granted; and so the like should be amongst us. So when he saith to the Corinthians also, 'When ye are gathered together, deliver such an one to Satan,' 1 Cor. v. 3–5, making it their sin that they did not, it implies there was therefore a law that had been given them, or else there had been no transgression. Thus, by the same kind of arguing, we find a promise in Scripture to be argued even out of a threatening; so Heb. iv. 5, 'If they shall enter into my rest.' Hence the apostle argues 'some shall enter in.'

3. When there is a commission of power given, there is a declared institution, as in those words, 'What you bind shall be bound, go and teach all nations;' therefore there is an institution of a church in Mat. xviii. 18–20, for there is a commission given to bind. And if apostolical power be an institution by virtue of that in John xx. 23, 'Whose sins ye remit are remitted,' &c., then here also, by virtue of these words, 'If thy brother offend, tell the church,' 'If thou wilt circumcise thyself and thy seed, I will bless thee'; 'Obey them that watch over your souls,' there is an institution; for it doth not only hold that every Christian should obey the minister he is under, but that he should be under his ministry, and that the minister should watch over him.

4. There are virtual institutions as well as formal; for the consequence which argues God's will, be it in one thing as well as in another, is as truly the word as in the express letter of it. So many points of doctrine are demonstrated, as the case of the resurrection of Christ the third day, and Jesus Christ's proof of the resurrection, by the instance of God's being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and as one truth may be gathered out of another, so one institution may be gathered out of another, for they are both but the declarations of God's will. And if there be a necessary consequence, that if there be such an institution there must be likewise this, that it is God's will that such a thing must be, then that is to be taken for an institution also.

When, therefore, many things that God hath instituted, being put altogether, do necessarily infer something else, then that also in an institution. As if that God hath appointed officers and overseers, limited to a flock by a special relation, over whom God hath made them overseers, then that there should be a flock, and that that flock should have its bounds which they have relation to, must be by institution also. If when they are gathered together they must deliver to Satan, and they must gather together to excommunicate and deliver to Satan, and this delivering to Satan be by institution, then their meeting also. As the conclusion is rightly fetched out of a major and minor, so if there be several particulars which, put together, supposeth some fourth or fifth thing, then God hath instituted that thing; if it be such as is not necessarily in nature, but dependeth upon the institution of his will. As if he hath commanded men to assemble and meet, to tarry one for another till they meet, and that if any of them sin they should cast them out, and that their power reacheth to them that are within, this necessarily implies that this company thus meeting are a church by institution in relation to such meetings. If a king did write to a town to do all such things as an incorporate town useth to do, if such and such offences fall out amongst them to judge them that are within, would not this be evidently a charter to them to make them an incorporate town? As lords are made lords being called up by a writ, so here; therefore all such directions as we find in the epistles, as in 1 Cor. v., to do thus and thus, implies them to

be incorporate bodies, which incorporation depends as much upon God's will as the acts themselves which they are to do being so incorporated do.

And perhaps the synagogues under the Old Testament, though we do not read when they were instituted by express command or law, as for making of the temple and the like there is, yet was derived out of the general charter for their meetings in the temple, and every seventh year to read the word, as less leases are by parcels made out of a greater lease; and so they were by institution consequentially.

5. Institutions are made known by prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the times of the gospel. As that upon every assembly there should be a cloud, that the day of Christ's resurrection should be the Christian Sabbath, 'This is the day that the Lord hath made,' Ps. cxviii. 24. Or appointed by prophecy; he had said, 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice,' in another psalm, and if not, that they should not enter into his rest, and this in Heb. iv. 3, 4 is by the apostle made an institution of the Christian Sabbath. He hath appointed, saith the apostle, another day, in opposition to the seventh day, which he had spoken of in the 5th and 6th verses; so Clement answerably in his epistle, speaking of the institution of the offices of bishops and deacons, quoteth the prophecy in Isa. lx. 17 out of the Septuagint, as then it was; neither, saith he, is this a new institution, but many years afore it was thus written of bishops and deacons. So also in the applying of types, we may discover what is an institution of God, but then we must find them so applied.* If we find them warrantably applied by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, or by prophecy in the Old (for the signification of a type it is by the Holy Ghost, as in Heb. ix. 8, 'the Holy Ghost thus signifying'), we may infer an institution from them. So when it is said in Isa. lxvi. 21, I will take of them for priests and for Levites, it implies that there should be these two ranks and sorts of officers in the New Testament, answerable to those two in the Old, for ordinary officers, as indeed there are, viz., bishops and deacons.

6. We may be assured what is of divine institution by parallel reason between things of a kind and of a like nature; as, for example, God having appointed baptism a sacrament, and the Lord's supper a sacrament, these being things of a kind. If he hath bidden and appointed ministers by institution to baptize, the reason is good that therefore they should have power to administer the Lord's supper, although there is no instance in Scripture for it; so if he have given them power to be the mouth of God in preaching to the people, then also that they should be the mouth of the people to God in prayer, we finding that public prayer is appointed as well as preaching, although we have not one instance in the New Testament that the officers of the church did perform public prayer. So also God hath appointed deacons, and he hath appointed elders; he hath appointed deacons to be set up by choice, and the elders to be set up by choice. We find that the people did choose their deacons; we warrantably argue therefore they may choose their elders. In things that are thus of a like reason, we argue from one to the other in other cases, as, for instance (since to us Christians it is not the judicial and ceremonial, but the moral law which is obligatory), how do we know, and why do we take the Levitical law for degrees prohibited in marriage? Lev. xviii. Because we find in 1 Cor. v. 1 one of those degrees forbidden in the New Testament, viz. for one to have his father's wife; and therefore all the rest, although we have no warrant in

* Καὶ τοῦτο οὐ καινῶς· ἐκ γὰρ δὴ πολλῶν χρόνων ἐγέγραπτο περὶ ἐπισκόπων, καὶ διακόνων. οὕτως γάρ που λέγει ἡ γραφὴ, Καταστήσω τοὺς ἐπισκόπους αὐτῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, καὶ τοὺς διακόνους αὐτῶν ἐν πίστει.—Clem. epist. ad Corinth. p. 55; edit. Patr. Junii. Oxon. 1633.

Scripture for every particular degree. Also in that law the letter of it only forbiddeth the aunt to marry the nephew, the popish divines have argued that yet it is lawful for the uncle to marry the niece; whereas, on the contrary, by a parity of reason it is unlawful, for it is all of a like kind, as the same way from Thebes to Athens that is from Athens to Thebes; the one therefore being forbidden to marry because they are nigh akin, since the other is of as nigh akin, therefore the law holds in the one as well as in the other. So under the New Testament we have days of fasting set apart as well as in the Old, for the same moral grounds, but we have no one instance of a day of thanksgiving in the New Testament; but these being parallel ordinances (for as thanksgiving and humbling of a man's self before God for sin are parallel duties, so to have a day of thanksgiving and a day of fasting are parallel ordinances), therefore since we find the one in the New Testament, and find both in the Old, we may argue the other from this one. But then, that we may argue rightly, the things must be collateral, and of a kind, as the Lord's supper and baptism are both sacraments, elders and deacons are both officers of the church; they are things co-ordinate, *ejusdem ordinis*, and so we may argue from one to the other in things that may be supposed common to both, and is not upon a peculiar reason restrained to one. But otherwise for things that are subordinate, as we may call them, and of another kind, there *par ratio* will not make an institution, for then it is not *par ratio*, because it is not *inter paria*, or things co-ordinate. As we can by no means infer that because God hath set up an office of elders superior to that of deacons, because he hath set up the office of pastors and teachers superior to that of ruling elders, that therefore upon a pretended necessity we may set up an office over all these elders, as the ancient times did a bishop. And so neither will it follow that because God hath set up a court in a particular church to correct offending brethren, by delivering up to Satan, that therefore they may set up an higher court in like manner to correct churches by excommunicating them. These are not things of the same order, but they are things of superiority and inferiority. Though we may argue in the judicial law, that if the aunt may not marry the nephew, likewise the uncle may not marry the niece, because they are things of the same order, yet we must not now go and make a new degree forbidden; as is the case betwixt our brethren and us in the Presbyterian controversy. Reason will help us to apply the same things in things collateral, but not to institute and set up things anew.

Concerning the use of man's reason in this point about institutions, we only say this, that man's reason may, by way of interpretation, find out what God hath set up, but it cannot proceed further. Men mistake in thinking that if God hath set up this, that therefore they may by like reason set up another thing; as because that God hath made set forms of prayer, that therefore men may; or as because that God did deliver the Scriptures to be read, therefore men may appoint sermons to be read. For in so doing man's reason becometh a judge, and takes on him God's authority, in inventing and authorising this, as God hath done another thing, whereas we should be content with God's means that he hath appointed; but in the other, man's reason is only but as a witness, that applies a thing according to what by reason he gathers God's mind to be. And there is this difference between doctrinal truths and institutions, that one truth may be by reason better fetched out of another, and more safely and easily than institutions. For one truth begets another, and truth is infinite in the consequences of it, but so institutions are not. And the reason of the difference is this, because they depend upon a promise, and upon the power and will of God immediately to concur with

them, and set them up. They are things that are singled out by the will of God to a spiritual end, with a spiritual efficacy.

7. We may be assured what is an institution of God, by examples which we meet with in the Scriptures. For one way by which Christ was pleased to convey his institutions to us, is by way of examples in the New Testament, without the which, being intended as a rule for us, we acknowledge, that a complete rule for all things could not be made forth. We shall therefore endeavour to give reason and demonstration, that the example of the practices of the primitive churches are to be taken as rules to us. It is true indeed examples then bind not, when the story is so written as there may be a supposition of error in the example, as the story of the lives of the patriarchs is. And also those examples bind not which we find expressly contradicted by a law, or which we find blamed, as that of Peter dissembling, Gal. ii. 11; and that of John's worshipping the angel, Rev. xix. 10. These are not rules. But if an example be written as a rule, then it will bind, because there is no supposition of error. But the apostles' ways in churches, and ordering of them, yea, and of the churches erected by them, are propounded and professed to be recorded as patterns and rules to us. Neither needs there a particular warrant to make every one a rule, whilst the general one that propounds all to be such will sanctify all. I shall first prove my assertion, and then shew the reasonableness of it that it should be so.

1. My first proof is from comparing the commission Christ gave his apostles at his ascending, Mat. xxviii. 20, with the Book of the Acts, the title and preface to it, and matter in it. In Mat. xxviii. 20, this is the commission he gave to his apostles considered as common persons, as the last clause argues, 'Lo, I am with you, to the end of the world.' His commission is, that they should teach those that were converted to observe whatever he had commanded them. For the matter of the doctrine of the gospel, what they should preach, he had given commission for that in the verse afore, ver. 19, 'Go, teach all nations;' which Mark interprets, chap. xvi. 15, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature,' that is, as to matters of faith, what they are to believe; for it follows, ver. 16, 'He that believes shall be saved.' But for matter of evangelical practices, what Christians are to do and to observe by special command from Christ, that injunction he gives in a distinction from the other, ver. 20; he speaks of matters of practice, as the word τήρειν, *observe*, implies. And their commission is precisely limited unto what Christ had commanded; he gives them no authority to impose and cause them to observe any other thing in practice but what he commanded; they went beyond their commission if they did. For matters of practice and observancy, apostles are to meddle with nothing else but Christ's commands; and they are enjoined to teach men to observe all that Christ commanded. Now, the story of the Acts relating what was observed and practised by the churches founded by the apostles, and so in the Epistles, they giving many hints what were the observations and orders of churches, we finding these, and gathering them into a body together, cannot look otherwise upon them than as practices taught them by the apostles; and if so, then no other than what Christ commanded. Observations of churches recorded, not blamed, we take to be directions from the apostles, and to that end written; and directions of the apostles we may safely take to be commands of Christ, as well in matters to be done as to be believed. This gives us a general ground to argue from examples of the apostolical churches.

2. But, secondly, when we find the book of the Acts to contain many practices in and about churches, and the officers of them, recorded but by way of story, and hints of examples to shew us what was the order of churches in

the apostles' times, we may be well assured that these were written on purpose to shew what the apostles, taught them from Christ to observe; which we gather from all these things laid together.

(1.) From the professed title of the Book of the Acts, which, as those titles to the Psalms, hath ever been acknowledged part of canonical Scripture. It is entitled The Acts or Πράξεις, practices, of the Apostles. That book contains much of their doctrine, and yet it is not entitled the doctrine of the apostles, but their practices. And it contains mostly the story of one apostle, Paul; and yet because his ordering and settling churches (as we shall anon observe) was by the same rule that the other apostles all went by, it is called The Acts of the Apostles, on purpose to consign and give warrant unto those practices as apostolical. Yea, also, though many things are the practices in churches themselves, and of the elders and brethren of them, yet they are called The Acts of the Apostles, because even those practices of churches were guided by the apostles, and so they are called their acts; and they taught them but to observe what Christ commanded.

(2.) Then, secondly, after Luke had given it this title, see further what his preface is, which further declares this to have been the scope and drift of it. He connects it with the story of Christ in the Gospel, as passing from all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ver. 1, from his example and doctrine, unto what the apostles did do, and what they did teach churches to observe by commandment from Christ; therefore he makes mention of the commands that Christ by the Spirit had given them unto the day he was taken up, ver. 2. All which commandments, and those especially which pertained to his kingdom and government of his church on earth, he renewed after his resurrection, speaking, says he, by the space of forty days of the things of the kingdom of God, ver. 3. The meaning of which both title and preface, and connecting it with the story of the evangelists, is evidently this, that these apostles being thus thoroughly furnished with commands from Christ, and especially about the things of his kingdom, in governing his saints (all which, whenas he was about to ascend, he gave in charge, as the evangelist Matthew tells us), that therefore they should teach those whom they converted to observe them; and that done, you have the story declaring the practices of the churches they reared, and the ways of the apostles in them, and both as such as were according to these commands of Christ given them, which he therefore mentions in the preface to give a countenance to them as rules. And the language of it is as if he had said, you shall know what those special commands pertaining to the kingdom of God, and which they taught the churches to observe, were, by their ways and practices here recorded, and mentioned as practised in the first churches. What reader, observing that charge in Matthew, given by Christ at his ascension, with the title of, and the preface to this book of the Acts, but will acknowledge all the story of all the practices here recorded to be Scripture, written for our admonition, and think this to be the scope and intent of them? So that although we have not a particular warrant annexed to every example here to make it a rule, yet we have this general, which if it make out this, that they are written to let us see the commandments of Christ in the apostles' practices, it is enough.

(3.) Then add to this, thirdly, that the practices here recorded of the apostles in the first churches of Judea, were settled generally in other churches of the Gentiles also, who yet varied in language, in fashion, and manners, and government civil. They ordain deacons in the church of Jerusalem, Acts vi., and elders, we read, mentioned chap. xi. 30, which are mentioned but historically; and yet we read of the same kind of officers,

deacons and elders, in other churches of the Gentiles; at Philippi, Philip. i. 1, and in many other churches mentioned in the Acts. Yea, and we find the same practices and officers, &c., in the churches of the Gentiles settled by Paul, that was converted and made an apostle many years after the other, and who learned not the gospel, nor any part of it, from the apostles or the churches of Judea, but had it by revelation of Jesus Christ, as himself says, Gal. i. 17, he immediately conferred not with flesh and blood, that is, with no man. 'Yea, I came not to Jerusalem (says he) to them which were apostles afore me, ver. 17; but I went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus; and then after three years I came again unto Jerusalem to visit Peter, ver. 18, and none apostles saw I save James,' ver. 19. And yet he set up the same practices in churches that the other apostles did, ordained elders in every city, and deacons, &c. Now that they should so agree in the same practices; that these all here recorded should be entitled the practices of the apostles; that they should be the same in several churches, in that first of Judea, and the same from several apostles in those several churches, and some of these apostles not consulting each with other; how could this be, but as guided by the same Spirit, and as going by the same rule common to all, which was the commands of Christ?

(4.) Yea, fourthly, as they have thus Christ's commands (afore the recording these practices) for their warrant, so some of them that are recorded in the Acts but as historically done at the first as acts of the apostles, yet are in after times in other scriptures given by way of command. Now this further confirms this same, being thus warranted and consigned for the rest, to shew the like reason of all the other. Thus the first mention of the office of deacons in the church, is but historically and by way of example set down with the occasion of it, Acts vi. As also of bishops and elders in the Acts often, and not at all as recorded therein with any commands from the apostles; and yet to shew that these examples are recorded for commands and rules, Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, writing to him how to behave himself in the house of God, mentions these offices of deacons and elders as the commands of Christ, 1 Tim. iii.; and, on the contrary, that which Christ gave a precept and an institution about, Matt. xviii., namely, church censure and excommunication, you have it in a directive example given to the church of Corinth, 1 Cor. v.

(5.) And for a fifth argument, yet further to confirm this, the apostles do in their epistles refer churches and others to their example in the churches, as rules for their imitation; and this in matters of church order. Thus, in 1 Cor. xi., Paul, when he was to write to the church of Corinth about ordering matters of order, as ver. 34 shews, and also all the particulars in that chapter do shew it (for they are matters of that nature, as about covering and uncovering, in token of subjection, and about their love feasts breeding divisions, and eating in the assemblies, and the abuse in the Lord's supper, &c.), he makes this the preface to all these, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ,' ver. 1, commending them in other things of their church order; such as these, they had remembered all these things, and kept the ordinances as he had delivered them; so ver. 2. But in these abuses and disorders, he saith he could not but dispraise them, ver. 17. Now, in all matters of this nature, as well as matters of doctrine, he exhorts them to be followers of his example and practice in the churches, as he was of Christ: so as about all such things Christ gave a command and the apostles gave order, and by their doctrine and practices delivered them. We have no such custom, says he, that is, no such practice, and so condemns their disorder, by bringing them to that as the rule. So also in his preface to that discourse of his about church censures to be executed upon

that incestuous member of the church, which you read of, chap. v., and other particular directions that follow in that epistle, he tells them, chap. iv., that though they may have many thousand instructors, yet he was their father, ver. 15; telling them, ver. 17, that he had sent Timothy, an evangelist, unto them, which should put them in remembrance of his ways in Christ, 'as I teach everywhere in every church'; the meaning whereof is plainly this, that he did bind them to no other rule than what he bound all other churches to; and that his example or way, whereof Timothy could put them in mind, was that rule he would have them and other churches follow, he teaching all churches to follow those his ways; for otherwise Timothy could not know what he taught everywhere in every church; so as he means not his doctrine materially, but his ways which he taught every church to follow, as also he requireth them. So in his writing to the church of the Philippians, his general conclusion in matters of practice is, chap. iv. 9, 'Those things which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do'; what you have received by hearing and learned by seeing.

1. I observe, his ways and practices in all the churches were regular and alike, and all tied to the same rule, and given by doctrine and by example also. Look what his ways were; the same he taught, and this universally in all churches, teaching them to observe it as Christ charged them.

2. He means his ways in matters of discipline and government of the church, as well as doctrine, and indeed those matters of discipline were delivered also by doctrine to those churches. For, 1, this is a preface to his discourse about matters of discipline, which he enters into in the following verses and following chapters. 2. Therefore he calleth them *ways*, not *way*, as being acts and practices of him as an apostle; things to be done, which matters of faith are not called. And 3. They were not moral ways of the moral law, for these the Old Testament directed to, and he might refer them unto the rules there; but evangelical ways he means, which the gospel brought in, ways in Christ, given as directions in all churches. And 4. To that end he sent Timothy, an evangelist, whose office it was to order things in church government, as appears by the matter of the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Add but this, that if anywhere he calls on them to imitate him in discipline, then in these places matters of discipline are meant and included; but he doth this in many places, as in 1 Cor. xi., and the matters of this first epistle to the Corinthians are much about order: 'The rest will I order when I come,' 1 Cor. xi. 34; and so Timothy was sent to establish them therein.

Again, 3. Writing to Timothy, an evangelist, on purpose to direct him how to behave himself in the house of God (this being the chief scope of those epistles, as was noted), he calls him to his example as his rule, as one that had known his doctrine, manners, life, &c.: 2 Tim. iii. 10, 'But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience.' The word is, παρηκολούθησας, *juxta sequi, vestigiis insistere*, hast followed it step by step. 1. In doctrine; 2. ἐν τῇ ἀγωγῇ, in converse or ways in the churches, as that place, 1 Cor. iv. 17, shews, in my platform, or form, or leading, or method; which may very well mean his institution of churches, his leading or framing them, and training them up.

4. Yea, yet further, to shew that the practices of churches settled by the apostles are rules unto us, we find him calling upon churches then to imitate the orders of other churches in those times planted by the apostles; therefore the practices of churches recorded, and not blamed, are intended as rules. The customs of churches is now much urged in the world to bind others to them, because the apostles referred to them; but the argument fails and differs in this, which is not considered, that the custom of churches

then were apostolical; and such customs in such churches, so directed infallibly, and recorded then when the apostles were present, we may safely account obligatory, but not customs merely human. Thus Paul argues from the custom of all churches, in that 1 Cor. xi. 16, 'We have no such custom, nor the churches of the saints,' that is, thus founded by apostles. Thus, 1 Thes. ii. 14, he commends them for having become followers of the churches of God in Judea, because they being the first churches planted by the apostles, were most exact according to the pattern. Of other churches he says, 'Came the word of God out from you?' 1 Cor. xiv. 36. Now, from the churches of Judea it did. And he speaks it generally of all their imitations of them, and that both in matters of order as well as faith, they being constituted and settled in both; for if not in all things, why puts he not the difference?

And to shew that all churches in such matters were ordered by the same rule, one as well as another, and that therefore what we find recorded of one church was in like manner in all, the apostle sometimes, in giving directions to one church, adds, 'As I ordain in other churches of Christ also.' Thus, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, in the ordering of collections on the first day of the week, which is in view but an inferior matter, and might have been done any day, yet when he gives instruction about it to the Corinthians, though it had been enough that he an apostle gave it, yet he puts this in, 'As I ordained in the churches of Galatia, so do ye also.' So in giving those rules about prophesying, to speak one by one, and the lesser number of prophets to submit to the greater, he enforceth it by this, in 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 'as we see in all the churches of the saints;' and ver. 37, 'let him that is spiritual acknowledge that these are the commands of God.' To this doth that old saying agree, *Constabit id esse ab apostolis traditum, quod ecclesiis apostolorum fuit sacrosanctum*, That is evident to have been delivered by the apostles, which hath been sacredly observed by the churches of the apostles.

5. Christ calls upon the same churches to imitate the first pattern given them, and wherein they or any swerved, he reduceth them to what they had at first received and learned from the apostles, as containing an immutable rule not to be swerved from. Now, if they had not liberty to swerve from them, then not we: Rev. iii. 3, 'Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.' Those epistles to the seven churches do as much concern discipline as matters of doctrine; for the chief fault he doth find with them still is slackness of discipline, whereby they suffered men to teach or practise amiss.

Now the general reason of this, why the apostle left these things in example, is, first, because this agrees with the nature of the thing, for matters of practice and order are as well, if not better, represented in examples than rules. Men are moved more by examples than by precepts (as Seneca said), as buildings and their platform are best set out in pictures. And, 2. Consider the manner of writing scriptures, the occasion of writing these of the New Testament, both Acts and Epistles, and it will appear that this way of example was most suitable. 1. The manner of the Scriptures, even as to matters of doctrine, is not to write methods or harmonies, truths ordered, but scattered, and often left to us to pick them out by intimations and coherences, and this as to many great truths. And 2. Let us consider when it was they were written. The work was not first to write scriptures, as having churches constituted to their hands. Though Moses' case was otherwise, who had a people already gathered, the nation of the Jews, which were in one place, whom he could therefore deliver a law unto, in precepts, yet the apostles dispersed themselves to several places; and their first work was

to convert men in all nations, and so to build them up into churches, and so carry their directions with them in their breasts. Thus they did first in Judea, then among the Gentiles; and every one of them (when apart) was led with an infallible Spirit in so doing, and all with one spirit agreeing and conspiring in the same, as by the churches set up by them doth appear. And many years after this were the Scriptures written to those churches (as occasion was) whom they had first ordered and disciplined, and this for the direction of times to come; and so, in writing to them, they hint relations of what was done and constituted among them historically (for the rule was already put in practice, and they were framed and reared). And so Luke writes an historical relation (after the apostles had set many churches) of their acts and practices; and it was not comely to write a law to such churches, to have such and such officers, &c., when already they had them; but rather they maintain their officers as existing among them already, and shew their diversity, by exhorting them to their several duties, as Rom. xii., and elsewhere; which yet, because they were erected by apostolical direction, is hint enough to us to have the like. If they had written to any company in a place that had not been gathered into church fellowship, to *ecclesia constituenda*, a church that was to be constituted, then it had been meet to have written the laws and rules of it how to order themselves. But the apostles had already, afore writing the Scripture, cast all churches into that order which Christ had appointed, and by example and precept, in word of mouth, delivered them the traditions, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xi. 2. And after upon occasion, writing to some of them as churches already constituted, he mentioneth matters of discipline, but either historically, as already settled among them, or by way of precept, in such particulars as they were amiss in; yet so as divine providence, that took care for after times, hath given a complete direction, either in hints and records of those examples, of what was already constituted in some churches, or in such those occasional precepts.

And further, in general, that examples recorded in Scripture are intended as rules, and so are understood by divines, appears by these instances.

1. It is evident in the matter of the Sabbath; for which, suppose that we have no positive command given in the New Testament (and the command in the Old was evidently pitched on the seventh day from the creation in the letter of the command), yet because we have mention of it by way of practice, and administration of holy meetings on that day,—as in that of collection of saints upon the first day of the week; and Acts xx. 7, of breaking bread on the first day of the week, &c.,—our divines have warrantably concluded the alteration of it. And therefore we do alike wonder at those that are for church ways, that they should be against the Lord's day, and that those that are for the Sabbath should be against the form of examples in the New Testament.

2. This is evident also in matters of contract afore marriage; but a hint, by the by, in a rule given concerning adultery, and in the example of Joseph and Mary, confirms the obligation of it.

3. The same appears in many particular explications of the moral law. All that write upon the commandments, though for greater things of the law they follow the express rules, yet the lesser explications are but from examples of holy men. Now allow but the same liberty in these evangelical precepts, that for the great things there are express precepts; as for the sacraments, for institution of churches, Mat. xviii.; for officers, in Timothy and Rom. xii.; for censures, Mat. xviii; but for many branches, for matter of carriage in these, we must have them out of the examples and hints in the New Testament, and it is all that we ask.

4. We find our Saviour Christ, and the apostles, arguing from examples of first patterns, thus: 1. To prove what is lawful, Mat. xii. 3, Christ argues from David's example in breaking a law, in eating when he was hungry the shew-bread (which was not otherwise lawful for him to eat, Exod. xxix. 33), to prove it lawful to pull ears of corn on the Sabbath day, and eat them. And so, from the example of the priests profaning the Sabbath, and being blameless, Mat. xii. 5, that is, not found fault with; and though Christ annexeth a ground out of one of the prophets, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;' yet consider that that law came long after, and these examples were in force long before this law, for Hosea wrote long after. 2. Examples are urged, not only to prove what is lawful, but also what is a duty. Thus the apostle Peter, 1 Peter iii. 3, 4, exhorts wives that their 'adorning should not be that of putting on apparel, but the ornament of a meek spirit,' for, ver. 5, 'after this manner in the old time, the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves.' Thus also in the matter of praying twice a day, morning and evening, says Paul: 2 Tim. i. 3, 'Whom I serve from my forefathers without ceasing, having them in remembrance in my prayers, day and night.' This custom to pray so often was from the forefathers, who in the temple did so, and in their houses; and this is argued not so much from an express command as from their examples. 3. Especially when the first institution is founded upon an example, then the example is the great argument for it: As *primum in quolibet genere est mensura reliquorum*, the first in every kind is the measure of the rest, so in this case too. Thus the law of marriage is founded upon the example of Adam's marriage, and so argued from, both by the prophet Malachi and by Christ also, both that a man should have but one wife, and not put her away. Thus Malachi argues from the very creation of but one woman for Adam, as a rule for us: Mal. ii. 15, 'And did he not make one? And wherefore one? Yet had he a residue of spirit' (namely, to have made more), 'that he might have a lawful and godly seed;' for which cause adultery and unlawful marriages are not sanctified from the first institution. And so our Saviour Christ, Mat. xix. 4–8, 'In the beginning it was not so,' argues from the practice then.

If it be said that there was a law, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother,' &c., yet still the law is founded upon the example of Adam and Eve, the first pattern, that because God made but two at first, therefore no more should be joined together, as Christ reasoneth, Mat. xix. 4, 'Have ye not read, that he that made them at the first, made them male and female?' He argues from that very instance. Yea, and he made the first woman of Adam's flesh, so as Adam said, 'She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,' and therefore, or for this cause (as Christ and the apostle interprets it), was the law given, yet so as Adam's example is made the foundation of it, because *primum in isto genere*, what Adam did then by God's appointment is a rule for ever.

Only to prevent a mistake, we will add these cautions as limitations.

1. That for the great and more essential parts of church order and worship, we have express and direct rules. As for the institution and constitution of a church, Mat. xviii.; for the administration of censures by admonition, excommunication; for the chief officers thereof, bishops and deacons; for the sacraments, public prayers, preaching, &c. The examples do only mostly concern the limits, order, and administration of all these. And in such things, Scripture examples should be admitted for rules, for so it is in interpreting the moral law. The great things of each commandment concern the grosser sins, and, mainest general duties, for which you have express rules and commands; but for all the particular branches and cases about

particular sins and duties, it will be hard to fetch express rules to direct men's consciences, but men take the help and benefit of examples unblamed in Scripture, for a decision of them. Look all interpreters of the ten commandments, and their quotations, and you will find it so. Now why should not as great a liberty be left us to find out God's politics as God's ethics, it being as necessary, if not more, that men should have directions to guide their converse in the house of God as in their own houses and private affairs?

2. We must be careful that we take such examples as are written and are not blamed, supposing this to be the rule, that what is not blamed or contradicted by a rule doth bind us. Christ, arguing from an example of the priests, allegeth that for a warrant; you read (saith he), 'how that the priests profaned the Sabbath, and are blameless,' Mat. xii. 5. Hence, because apostolical examples in the converse in churches are recorded as rules, therefore such examples of theirs as were faulty are blamed, and took notice of, as Peter's example in a church matter at Antioch, Gal. ii.; Paul reproved him to his face, and that upon this ground, because his example, being an apostle, 'compelled men,' Gal. ii. 14, it had the force of an argument in it.

3. We must get characters to distinguish between extraordinary and ordinary examples, recorded of churches and the apostles. As we do make a distinction of Christ's own example, and of Philip's baptizing out of a church (he being an evangelist, and carrying church power about with him, and the person's case requiring present departure into a far country), and of Christians selling their estates in the first churches of the Jews, when there were many poor, and of the apostles being maintained and sent into all the world.

If you ask how we shall distinguish them? we answer, even as you do other things that are extraordinary, promiscuously recorded with ordinary; for the things distinguish themselves, as 1 Cor. xii., speaking of gifts, he promiscuously reckons up ordinary and extraordinary, vers. 8–10, 'To one is given a word of wisdom; to another a word of knowledge; to another the gifts of healing; and to another working of miracles; to another divers tongues;' here is no greater matter of distinction put for the things, than what themselves afford. The gifts that remain still in the church are ordinary, they that do not are extraordinary. So for officers: ver. 28, 'God hath set in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then helps in government.' How can we distinguish here, and know that we have teachers and government, and not apostles, &c., but by this, that the necessity of gifts for teaching and government still remains, not the other? And so do we as easily distinguish of examples; such as were things common, founded upon common and general respects, these we account ordinary, and to bind, because they may continue, and the reason of them continue, where it is not so in extraordinary.

4. The like we say of examples merely occasional. The occasion ceasing, the thing ceaseth; and therein we judge but as we do of other things under the law, when yet Moses gave direct rules, as in eating the passover, that they were commanded to do it with staves in their hands, and in haste, was merely suited to the occasion of the first passover, because that night they were to travel, and so it did not bind afterward.

If you say, Shew me a complete system of directions out of the examples or rules given, and we will believe you;

To this we answer: 1. That in the main and substantial matters, we can shew enough to guide the present practices of churches in managing the great and necessary ordinances of Christ. We gave one instance afore for all the rest, about dispensing the censures of the church. And 2. By finding express order taken about small things (as to carnal eyes they may seem

to be), we may be directed in greater; as how and when to order the collection for the saints, on the first day of the week, and to treasure up by a man's self weekly, as God hath blessed him, whereas another set day in the week might have served, according to human prudence, as well; and to lay up as God hath blessed a man, at the month's end, might seem to have been as well in a way of human arbitrary prudence, and have been left to men's directions, and yet the apostle makes this an order in Corinth, and in the churches in Galatia. Now, think we, if God took care and bound up human wisdom, and interposed his own in matters of such small moment, as these circumstances seem to be, we cannot but believe he hath done the like in all things else of a like nature; and either he would have given no rules about such things, or have left a complete rule, if we could find it out. That in digging, we find such small medals as these, here and there, stamped by God's authority, and bearing the image of his wisdom and sovereignty, doth encourage us to dig, hoping to find that whole treasure that is hid in Christ, in whom we are complete for all treasures of knowledge and wisdom. And this binds up our understandings from daring to coin by human wisdom and authority, any the like institutions, lest we should set up our posts by God's, and eke out by human prudence those things which we see God hath used his wisdom to deliver to us (as by such instances evidently appears), wherein we ought to suspect our ignorance of his will, rather than his faithfulness, to deliver all of the like nature. And, 3dly, We are to be careful in doing what we find a rule and examples for, and so whereunto we have attained, walk. We find that true of Christ, and made good by him unto us, that in doing the will of God, we know it; and in matters of practice, experience, with faith waiting for light, helps to the knowledge, more than all the study in the abstract in the world can do. And therefore, though we profess we know not rules for every case or query that may be put, yet so far as we have attained, we walk; suspending where we want light till God reveal it, knowing that God will accept this: we finding that in all sorts of human actions, in all callings and relations, there are a thousand cases wherein men are to seek for direction out of the word, and yet they do not forbear to walk in all those relations, till they are resolved of every particular case and duty that may fall out. And so in matters of doctrine, if we should forbear to believe the truths we know and have received, until we have a complete system of undoubted verity, and Paul's form of wholesome words in all particulars, we should be ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of, and assent to, any truth.

And therefore our desire is, that the churches of Christ would in this age (wherein these things are inquired into, and the reformation of discipline yet imperfect) walk by this rule, that so far as they agree, and in common have found out the rule, to walk by it, and be obliged so to do; and wherein they differ, or want that light which others have, they might be left to that rule which God hath set up, as the great peace-maker and arbiter in his churches, not to judge one another for these things, but to say with the apostle, 'These that are otherwise minded, God shall reveal it to them in his due time;' and in so doing, know God will accept us, and we hope men will.

CHAPTER V.

That there are ordinances of public worship established in churches under the New Testament, which are to continue to the end of the world.

I design not to discourse here of the doctrine of ordinances, as it is stated against the seekers, who yield the being of such ordinances to be of divine right, and no deficiency to be in Christ's institution; and yet assert that as a rose in winter hath a being in the world, of right, as well as any other fruit of the earth then extant, only there is not a way or means of its actual existence by reason of the season, so ordinances have a right of being in the church, but antichrist hath withered all things, and made an interruption in ordinances, ministry, &c. An unhappy generation of men have risen up, who cry down all ordinances as forms, yea, and would rank them as forms equally with all the idolatries in popery, or any other superstitions, in all which (say they) God was in those appearances served, as well as in those that were once of his own institution; so making them all one, and all forms alike, they pretend to live in the Spirit, and not only without all these, but above them. But the prophecy of Jude, and other holy apostles, Paul and Peter, have given in caution concerning these: Jude ver. 18–21, 'How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they which separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your more holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' The separation there is to be interpreted by what, as the opposite thereto, the apostle exhorts true believers unto. 'But you, beloved, building up yourselves,' &c., ver. 20. What he mentioneth as means of grace to preserve them to eternal life, from these it was these men separated, pretending to live in the Spirit; and therefore, with indignation, the holy apostle saith of them, that they were 'sensual, not having the Spirit.' They separated not from other Christians, but from these things, that were means of grace when influenced by the Spirit. I will not meddle with any of their evasions, but only positively speak that which concerns the truth of my position, and prove the existency and continuance of gospel ordinances, as baptism, the Lord's supper, &c. I will begin with that scripture upon which I have discoursed on another occasion, namely, to shew the danger of living in the practice of prevailing lusts, under ordinances. That which now I shall make use of that scripture for, is to shew both the existence and continuance of ordinances, of baptism, and the Lord's supper, under the New Testament.

1 Cor. x. 1–6, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ: but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.' Compare it with ver. 11: 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.'

The general scope is, to shew how, for the substance of them, the fathers enjoyed the same spiritual ordinances, which now our baptism and the Lord's supper answers to, and which these Corinthians, and all Christians generally,

lived under, only with that difference which that dispensation of the old had in it from this of the new. As that those were more shadowy, and in their immediate ordination but types, as their baptism then pointed forth immediately; their total deliverance from Egypt, as then baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea; (but yet under that to us believers is held forth our baptism as union unto Christ, of whom Moses was a type, and the deliverance of our souls from hell and Satan); whereas our ordinances now have that outward rind shaled off, and Christ only, and baptism unto him, are barely and nakedly held forth, &c. Now, I shall but prosecute two observations, which to me seem natural as to this assertion out of the Scripture, concerning these two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper here particularly specified, and so consequently concerning all other parts of instituted worship under the gospel.

Obs. 1. Observe first, that these ordinances were generally received and practised by the Christians of those times.

Obs. 2. Observe secondly, that these ordinances are to continue to the end of the world.

To prove the first observation, I remark the note of universality which the apostle useth. As he says that those Israelites were types of us, and their ordinances types of ours, so in making the parallel between us and them, he carefully inserts this, that as all of them were partakers, and lived under those ordinances then, so all of us Christians do partake, or ought to do, of these sacraments that answer unto those types of theirs now. Of the fathers, as he calls them, in the wilderness, he says it no less than five times: 'All our fathers were in the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink.' And answerably, concerning the Christians of those times, he utters it in all their names, and involves himself: ver. 17, 'We are all partakers of that one bread;' and says the same of baptism: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'We are all baptized by one Spirit, into one body, and do all drink,' &c.; and Rom. vi. 3, 4, 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore are we buried with him by baptism into death.' He argues from the known and generally received profession and practice of all Christians: Know ye not, 'that so many of us as were baptized,' that is, that whoever of us that profess baptism into Christ, profess baptism into his death, as the thing intended by it. The *us* there is the generality of Christians, distinguished usually by that word from heathens: as Rom. xiv. 7, 1 Cor. viii. 6, 'To us there is but one God,' &c., that is, we Christians profess all, and generally so. And his scope being to shew how sanctification flows from being in Christ, his argument is drawn from a general principle of the *us* of Christians. As many of us, to a man, as we use to say, as have been baptized into Christ, and do profess that part of religion, are all taught that the import thereof is to be therewith baptized into his death. So that his expression, *as many of us*, imports not, as if some were and some were not baptized (for then his argument of sanctification had not been binding to the generality of Christians, which, it is evident, it was in his intention), but it imports the contrary, that as many as were Christians were all baptized, and were taught this to be the meaning of that great point and principle of religion, that as they were baptized into Christ thereby, so also into his death.

I observe, also, out of this, 1 Cor. x., that it was in esteem, yea, and taken for granted, a point of the then religion, to receive the Lord's supper. For observe how he reasons against their eating in the idol's temple things sacrificed to idols: ver. 21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup

of devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.' He set these two one against the other; to eat in the idol's temple as a point of heathenish religion, and to partake of the Lord's supper as a point of our Christian profession. Now, that he might be sure at once, for ever to knock down that idolatrous practice, he useth this argument drawn from that, which, according to all the then received principles, could not be denied. He argues with them in this manner: A main practice of your Christian profession, which you all take up, and of which you must in effect renounce your profession if you renounce this practice, is the Lord's supper. It is the outward badge of your Christian religion, and you must utterly renounce that if you will needs also practise this other of eating in the idol's temple, for there is a contradiction between them, ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils. Christ cares not for your coming to his supper, but had rather you should keep away, if you also receive the devil's sacraments. Thus he plainly works upon this firm ground, in which they knew he must not be at a loss, that they must continue to drink of that cup, that they must partake of that table; so he takes that for granted, as sacred to them, and then infers that other, of not eating in the idol's temple. And it is as if he had said, I know I have you fast here; that you will never forsake assembling yourselves for the Lord's supper, or neglect to do it; this, I hope, you will all say presently, that you will never do. Now, then, saith he, I tell you, you cannot partake of the Lord's cup and of the devil's; choose you whether you will give over the one or the other, upon your peril. He holds them hard to it, in this one, whilst he argues from thence against the other. Now, as to the opinion of some men in our days, that profess they are not bound to the Lord's supper, and think it is no point of any religion, but that they can live without it or above it. If the devil had thought of this, yea, and put it into the heads of any in those days, unto such the apostle Paul's argument would have had no strength or force of conviction. For if he had said to them, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord in the sacrament,' &c., as ver. 16, they might readily have said, or any one for them: This is no argument to us, it reacheth not our principles, for we think not ourselves obliged to drink the cup of the Lord, nor to eat at his table. And, indeed, those that profess this principle, I except the dark scrupled seekers, can as well partake of the mass as of the Lord's supper; they are all to them but forms, the one as well as the other, and a Christian may use all, and is above all. This, as to the first thing I observed, concerning these ordinances.

Obs. The second observation is, that there is to be a continuance of these ordinances to after ages, which, out of the scope of the text, I demonstrate thus: that twice in the 6th verse, and in the 11th verse, in making the reddition or application of the story of the Israelites, both for ordinances and for like punishment due to the abuse of them, he says, that in these they were τύποι ἡμῶν, types of us; so ver. 6, which is their conclusion as to their enjoyment of like ordinances, and so ver. 11, as to our incurring the same punishment he had from the 6th verse discoursed of; he subjoins, 'These things were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' So that all Christians, that do live under, or ought to live under, these ordinances, partaking of those sins, are to partake of these punishments, as well as these Corinthians. Some of the seekers, interpreting that place in Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Go, preach and baptize, I am with you in all things, to the end of the world;' the words being in the original, τελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, in the singular number, would have this determine in the first age of the church; whereas, everywhere in Christ's speeches afore, the very same phrase in the singular also is put to express the end of the

world, or, as Paul says, 1 Cor. xi. 26, until Christ come. In Mat. xiii. 40, 49, also, you have the same phrase, where is meant the end of this world, when the day of judgment comes, as also plainly distinguished from the end of that age wherein Jerusalem was destroyed, Mat. xxiv. 3. And Christ also adds in this place of Mat. xxviii. 20, the word *alway*, which means, all the days or times to the end of the world. And so all the ages between are implied. Well, but farther, here you see that, in 1 Cor. x. 11, it is affirmed of the Lord's supper, as well as baptism, that they concern all them upon whom the ends of the world (in the plural) are come, that is, all the ages that succeed each other in this last scene of the world. So as indeed, if any were to be excepted, those rather that lived in the first age comparatively should. We have lived sixteen hundred years since Paul wrote this, and upon us, rather than upon them, it might be said that the ends of the world are come. I will but cast in this out of this scripture more, and I think it is not altogether to be slighted as to this head. You see he plainly parallels our sacraments and theirs as types and anti-types. Now, what should be the mystery then, that when he speaks of that sacramental rock, which was Christ, and says that they drunk thereof, he would needs insert one circumstance concerning it, that is yet not so evident in the story of the Old Testament? The rock (says he) 'which followed them,' that is, all along through their travel in the wilderness. It is to be supposed the rock stood in its own place, but Moses striking it, and a river of water springing forth served them with water, not only in that place, but followed them in all their journey in that desert; which the Psalmist intimates, Ps. cv. 41, 'He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.' Surely this is (as here) added to no other purpose but to make up the parallel in our ordinances, the anti-type. When God had struck Christ the rock, and opened his side (and it was for us rebels too, as Moses then called the Israelites, that water and blood came forth, which are communicated to us in baptism, which is a washing by water, as blood is held forth in the Lord's supper), these ordinances were as channels cut out by God, through the means and conduct of which this rock should follow us, and that whilst the church is in the wilderness, and on this side Canaan; as that did, as a sacrament to the end of their journey. And so in this was the type fulfilled to them, in the primitive ages of the church, and is yet to be fulfilled unto us, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I shall now, by other arguments, farther prove that there are ordinances, or instituted worship, under the New Testament, to continue unto the end of the world.

1. The new covenant hath ordinances of divine worship annexed unto it, as well as the old covenant had; for which the coherence of the eighth and ninth chapters to the Hebrews, the latter part of the ninth, and the beginning of the tenth, are a clear evidence. The scope of that epistle is indeed to shew how the worship and ordinances of the Old Testament were translated into a worship under the New, in substance answering to it; and how Christ, as an high priest, was as faithful to God in his house as Moses was, Heb. iii. In the eighth chapter, having treated of the two covenants, the old and new, and by the new understanding that, wherein the promise was, 'that they should not need to be taught,' &c., ver. 10, then presently upon it, chap. ix. 1, he goes on thus: 'Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service,' which was the tabernacle, and the worship performed there; so ver. 2–7: 'For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is

called the Sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all: which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant, overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.' I lay hold of the word *also*, as implying that therefore the new covenant hath the like ordinances; and not only so, but observe that, in God's intention, our ordinances were the first of the two, and the chief, though theirs first in time. For he says not, the new covenant hath also, but the old had also; for ours were more the substance, theirs more the type and shadow; yet so as both must have ordinances of divine worship, the new as well as the old, whilst it continues. And ver. 10, they were appointed, but until the time of the reformation, or change of worship to be made, not of the abolition of it; and what those ordinances are you know.

2. If there be no instituted ordinances to continue, then the second commandment is utterly obliterated under the gospel, or under the times of the gospel, in which these ordinances are supposed to cease. What is the difference between the first commandment and the second? The first commands such worship to God as is always and for ever due to him; as he is God, and we creatures, which is termed *cultus naturalis*, natural worship; because due upon the account of our being creatures, and so indispensable and eternal, and continuing in heaven, as to fear God, love him, &c. The second commands instituted worship, or such means and helps of worship as God sanctifies by his institution, as helps and means to worship him by, and convey himself to us, which continues whilst we are on earth. Now this commandment hath been and hath continued in all the states which men have gone through, or shall go through, whilst on earth. And though the duties have been changed, as the priesthood hath varied, or as God was pleased to signify his good pleasure, how he meant to be worshipped, yet so as in all states on earth, there have been some or other such duties belonging to the commandment in force; which sufficiently argues that command to have been, and to be still, in force in all states.

1. In innocency, those two trees, the tree of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, were two sacraments admonishing Adam, the one of his mutable condition, the other sealing up the promise of life. Under the law, it is evident that a commanded worship was in force; under the gospel, which began to be preached by John, together therewith was baptism instituted, of which Christ (who represented us) did in the name of us all as head say, 'Thus it becomes *us* to fulfil all righteousness;' and he began an example unto us therein. And indeed, if there were no second command in force under the gospel, then there were no such sin as idolatry, or false worship of the true God, as far as concerns the means of worship. There will be no idolatry but what is heathenish, or the worship of a false God. Now the consequence is good, for the negative part of the command, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself an image,' or use false means to worship the true God, is founded on the existence of a positive part, that there are means or institutions of true worship appointed by God. But now there is such an idolatry and superstition of worshipping God by false means, forbidden under the New Testament. For, Col. ii., Paul bids them to take heed of will-worship, and voluntary humility not commanded: ver. 21–23, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not: which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom, in will-

worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.' And John, that lived to the end of that age, at last still chargeth them to keep themselves from idols, 1 John v. 21. It was an admonition not so much against heathenish idolatry, which is to worship outwardly another god, as against popish, which was coming upon the world (as Paul also foretold both to Timothy and in his other epistles), and for which God brought upon the Christian world those plagues which have befallen the Grecian churches, Rev. ix. 20, and for which Rome also is threatened, Rev. xvii. xviii.

3. If there were no ordinances, God should have no provision for his public worship, and Christ should have no court on earth. Two things are the glory of a king, the laws and jurisdiction by which he rules abroad, and the state and reverence done him in his own house at home. Christ is the king of nations, Rev. xv. 3, and therefore all are exhorted to worship him, ver. 4. In Heb. iii. 1, Christ is as well termed our high priest as our apostle. As our apostle, he hath given forth our faith in the doctrine, and we believe it; as our high priest, he is the leader of all the worship of the New Testament, as the high priest was of old. The apostle makes an inference from this: Heb. x. ver. 21–25, 'By a new and living way, which he had consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised), and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.' Christ is an high priest, therefore he hath an house, a court on earth, and therefore worship, in which you must draw near with inward washings and sprinklings (as the priests of old in the type did with water, &c.); and therefore he must also have assemblies to be worshipped in. So, ver. 25, it follows, 'Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.' He exhorteth them to meet in churches, as the Jews did in synagogues; so the word *τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν* signifies. And now such assemblies must have ordinances to converse with God in, as they accordingly had preaching and singing of psalms, 1 Cor. xiv. 23–26, and sacraments of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi., to which all were bound, for they were to tarry one for another, ver. 33; and that being the top ordinance of the gospel, their whole assembling or meeting was denominated from it, Acts xx. 7, when the disciples met to break bread; and 1 Cor. ii. 20, 'When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.' Thus their assembling to worship, and their eating the Lord's supper, are promiscuously put one for the other. So among the ancients, this did bear the denomination, being termed *sacra σύναξις*,* and is put for the whole of gospel worship in the prophecy: 'From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mal. i. 11.

But to prove the continuance of these two ordinances, both of preaching and of the Lord's supper, we need only consider that Christ hath adjoined his promise to them both. Christ's promise is annexed to that of preaching, Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Teaching them to do whatever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you to the end of the world;' and as for the Lord's supper,

* See Mr Joseph Mede, p. 355 of his works, Edit. London, 1677.

Paul expressly says, 'As I received of the Lord, so I deliver to you,' 1 Cor. xi. 23. It is therefore one of those commands of Christ, 'And do this (said Christ, Luke xxii. 19) in remembrance of me,' which is there expressed as a command, and implied by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 'I praise you that you keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you;' whereof this of the Lord's supper was one, and a great one, insisted on throughout the chapter. And writing to the Thessalonians, and giving a warning to them, and to those that should live in the times when popery should overspread the world (of which speaks 2 Thes. ii. 3–13), he admonisheth as a remedy against these seducements: ver. 15, 'To hold fast the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by epistle.' This, though given to the Thessalonians, yet must needs more properly concern those that should live in the times when the perverting of ordinances should come into the world, for then is the most need of that exhortation; when there is an advance of popish innovations, then is the proper season for it. And therefore, though it concerned those Thessalonians in those times, when the mystery of iniquity began to work, yet upon the same ground more fully it concerns us in these times, when this mystery of iniquity hath prevailed. For their sakes, therefore, this was written, upon whom these latter ends of the world are come, and so concerns us and our forefathers who reformed from popery, to hold firmly to Scriptures and ordinances as a preservative against popery. Yea, Paul goes further: 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'For (says he) as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come;' and again, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' It is as if he had said, Christ must be absent till the day of judgment, and the heaven of heavens must contain him till then; and to keep up the remembrance of that great love of his in dying, he hath appointed this as the memorial of him whilst absent, till he come. And what manner of coming that is, which puts the period to this his absence, the angels have resolved us, and also how he will come: Acts i. 10, 11, 'And while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' If ye say he is already come in spirit, do but consider who was more filled with the Spirit than Christ himself? and yet he was not only baptized, but in being baptized, professeth his observance of it to be for this end, to fulfil all righteousness; and he seems also to speak in the name of us, *i. e.* of all believers, and so it becomes us to fulfil, &c., Mat. iii. 15, because he, as the head, gave example to all his succeeding members. And not only so, but though he thereupon received the Spirit, and was in spirit in the wilderness, and that above measure, as John testifies of him, John iii. 34, yet he lived under the observation of all the Jewish ordinances of worship, as going to the feasts, eating the passover, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

That by excommunication more is meant than bare casting out of the church.—That it is an ordinance of Christ, to deliver the excommunicate person to Satan in his name and power.—The rules which Christ hath given for church admonitions and censures.

Though this ordinance of excommunication be described many ways; as, 1, 'Let him be to thee as an heathen and a publican,' Mat. xviii. 17;

and 2, 'With such an one, no, not to eat,' 1 Cor. v. 11; and 3, it is expressed as a 'casting out of the church,' 3 John 10; yet over and above all this, it is called a delivering unto Satan, 1 Cor. v. 5. And now that by this phrase more is intended than simply an ejection out of the church, these following arguments evince.

1. That word of delivering to Satan imports something positive, distinct from and including more in it than ejection out of the church. It imports a giving up a person to receive a positive punishment from Satan, therefore is more than a casting out of the church. This is apparent, for as the sentence of a judge (though it doth not pitch upon the consequent of the punishment of death, viz., the sending a man to hell, nor doth he express the sentence he judgeth him to by that) imports more than a mere casting the condemned man out of the world, for the sentence directly expresseth that punishment which the judge hath power to inflict, viz. the carrying of the man back to the gaol from whence he came, and from thence to the place of execution, and that there he should be hanged (though he doth not put it into the sentence, in the name of the king to deliver this man to the devil to be damned), so in the sentence of excommunication there is more implied than a casting out of the person out of the society of Christians; for the judgment, the sentence, and that in the name and power of Christ, is to deliver unto Satan. It is not to leave the man unto Satan only, but it is to deliver unto Satan, which is an act of authority; to give him up unto him, as to give a man up to the jailor or to the tormentor. Thus when God speaks to Satan of Job, he is in thine hand (saith he), I have given him up unto thee, Job i. 12 and ii. 6.

But you will say the bare casting of a person out of the church still imports but the consequent of it, viz. a delivering him up to Satan, as to deprive of light is to give up to darkness. But unto that it is answered, that what the formal sentence of excommunication pitches upon is more than a mere consequent of the person's being cast out, or is more than accidental; for what the very formal sentence of excommunication pitches upon, and which is in the power of Christ, is not barely leaving the man unto Satan, but a delivering of him unto Satan. Yea, this is in the very definition of excommunication, and therefore is not to be omitted. For that which is the positive form of the sentence, and by which excommunication is expressed, containeth the essential terminative object or matter of it, that a man is so delivered up to the devil, as in the name, so in the power of the Lord Jesus. Now this, viz. the delivering of a person to Satan in the name of Christ, is a distinct character of excommunication, as that is of baptism, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As in the act of ordination, when you say, I ordain thee a minister or a pastor, it imports truly what is said, and not only in a metaphor but a reality; so in this act of excommunication, it is with the power of the Lord Jesus to deliver such an one unto Satan; therefore when Christ doth give commission to the church to do it, in his name and power, this being the formal sentence, his power concurreth to it. Now this is more than to throw out of the church, for if there was only a power to throw the man out of the church in the name of Christ, without a power to deliver unto Satan, the church would have no more prerogative than what is a common thing to all societies. But now when the church can give Satan power over a man, this is an act of the power of Jesus Christ indeed, peculiar to a church of his.

2. Again, if excommunication puts a man into a different state than merely that of being again thrown into the world under Satan, as the world is that never professed Christ, then it imports some distinct thing from

casting out of the church. But a person's being excommunicated is a differing thing from being in the world, or under Satan, as the world is. And it is so not only in this respect, that they that are in the world, and never were of any church, are so in the world as withal they never were of any church, as this man hath been, but it is also different in respect of some special power that Satan should have over this excommunicated person; which is evident by this, because that power which Satan hath over a man unregenerate in the world is to carry him on to sin, to work effectually in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2, therefore we are said, Col. i. 13, to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, that is, of Satan, who, as the strong man, keepeth all in peace. But so to be delivered to Satan cannot be the meaning of excommunicating a man, for the intent of this is to destroy the flesh and to save his spirit, therefore it is not to deliver a man unto Satan so as to be a man of the world out of the church. Again, the difference is evident by this, that this man's punishment is in other respects greater than that of a man unregenerate in the world, for as the apostle saith, the saints may eat with them of the world, but with such a one as is excommunicate they are not to eat, 1 Cor. v. 11.

3. Excommunication imports a positive punishment, for it is a spiritual revenge. The negative throwing out of the church is but that which is common to all societies; 'But the weapons of our warfare' (says the apostle) 'are mighty through God, having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience,' 2 Cor. x. 4–6, as will be evident if we do but lay all these following things together. 1. That Satan is ready to punish the man in his spirit by terrors, and to set on his sins with horrors if he have leave from Christ. 2. This man is by the power of Christ given up, and not left only to him. 3. He is given up to Satan to punish and correct him: 1 Tim. i. 20, 'Whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme,' that is, that they may learn how horrid a sin it is to blaspheme by what Satan inflicts. The word translated to *learn* is in the Greek παιδευθῶσι, which is, to be disciplined as a child is, to learn by rods; so that being delivered unto Satan to learn how dreadful it is to blaspheme, implies that Satan is to whip them, that they may learn by a suitable punishment what it is to blaspheme, by Satan's casting hellish terrors into their mind.

4. And the analogy of a man's sin when he deserveth excommunication, and the punishment itself, seem to be suitable, and that the sin deserves it in a way of proportion. For when a man is obstinate, the frame of his spirit is such that he doth not regard the ordinances, therefore to be cast out of the communion of saints would not be a sore punishment to him, neither would that be enough to bring him in; and therefore the only way to bring this man in is to have Satan set on his back with terrors, as in the work of humiliation at first.

5. Then again, such a man hath grieved the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and therefore he is suitably given up unto Satan as an accuser and tormentor; and so the phrase of delivering unto Satan seems to mean a spiritual punishment opposite unto joy in the Holy Ghost, which is the fruit of obedience; that as the 'kingdom of God is joy, and righteousness, and peace,' Rom. xiv. 17, 'the peace of God shall guard your hearts through the working of the Holy Ghost,' Philip. iv. 7, so that estate this man is given up to is an estate of terror and darkness; it is not to be an unregenerate man, but it is to be under the bondage of Satan.

6. And then again, excommunication is called the retaining of sin, and binding of sin, a binding of sin upon the conscience. Now the question is, *Quo efficiente?* by whom this should be done. This sentence of delivering

him unto Satan, implies that Satan hath power given him to set his sin on upon his conscience; and that he is able to set sin on upon the conscience is evident from other scriptures.

7. Again, we do find by experience that where excommunication is not administered rightly, there the saints oftentimes are given up to very great terrors of conscience, and that from Satan, and left to great temptations; the Lord sometime working without the ordinance that which he doth work by the ordinance of excommunication when it is rightly administered.

8. This fruit doth seem to have been in that Corinthian, 2 Cor. ii., for the apostle desires them to forgive him, lest he should be swallowed up with over much sorrow, ver. 7. It seems to be more than an human sorrow, or more than a sorrow which would have been from the Holy Ghost's working, for that would not have swallowed a man up. It implies, therefore, that he was in Satan's power, 'We are not ignorant (saith he) of his devices,' ver. 11, and that his devices were to keep this poor man in his clutches. And the phrase there, 'swallowed up,' answereth to what is said of Satan in other cases, 'He goeth up and down seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Peter v. 8; whom he may drink up, so the word signifieth, καταπίῃ.

9. And again, excommunication may seem to be more than merely a throwing out of the church, by that parallel of a greater excommunication than what is ordinary, that *anathema-maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22, which was not only to give a man up to Satan for a time, but to give him up into an eternal curse, when they saw that a man which had been a professor loved not the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, hated him, as sinning against the Holy Ghost. Now, if the church in that case hath power more than to eject, viz., to eject with an eternal curse, never to receive a man more, which God ratifieth in heaven, then in the ordinary casting a man out of the church, though there be hope that he may be recalled again, the way of doing it is not merely a private punishment, or a throwing him out of the church, which should work upon him in a moral way of a sorrowful thought and sense, that he is cast out from among the people of God, but it is a giving him up to Satan to terrify him; God sanctifying that, as he doth other afflictions, to bring him in.

10. If excommunication were nothing else but a seclusion from the church, then for the substance of the act it would be no more than a continued suspension; for if the substance of the act be the same, they do not differ, though the one be done out of an act of authority, the other not. They will admit him again upon repentance if he be excommunicated, as well as when suspended; and if he do not repent, they will not admit him, no more than when he is excommunicated; and when he is excommunicated he needs not a new admission, as when he is suspended and repents he doth not; so that for the extrinsecal act they are all one. But excommunication hath a spiritual punishment attending it, and therefore answerably when that Corinthian was to be received again, 2 Cor. ii., they are not simply to pass an act of forgiveness, and to receive him again, but to comfort him also.

If it be objected that we do not always see this effect of a spiritual punishment following excommunication.

1. We reply first, that there have been very few excommunications in the world that have been from those that have had the right power of doing it, and those excommunications which have been administered by the rightful persons yet have not been due, because proceeding on too slight occasions, and such as have not deserved excommunication.

2. They have in their excommunication trusted more to the power of the magistrate, when it should have come to a writ *de excommunicato capiendo*,

or to horning of a man as in Scotland, banishing him, or depriving him of his estate, &c., they have confided, I say, in the magistrate's power, and in his punishment, more than in excommunication, or else why have they recourse to it to make a man repent? Whereas if they would wholly leave it unto God to inflict that which he hath ordained to be the punishment, and that sufficient too (for all his means are sufficient, as the apostle says, 'the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to revenge all disobedience'), 2 Cor. x. 4, it would prove efficacious enough to all ends and purposes, and sufficient for such a man would that punishment be. But because they put confidence in an arm of flesh to bring him in, as if that were more an effectual means than the power of God, therefore God makes his ordinance to be but as an arm of flesh, and to have no other effect or fruit than what the magistrate's punishment hath.

3. It is with this as with all other ordinances, which do not always attain their end which they are principally ordained for, because that God works freely by them. Preaching is ordained to convert, yet there are millions of men to whom the word is preached upon whom it hath not this effect; for although they have all heard, yet they have not all believed, Rom. x. 18. It is enough that God hath ordained it to such an end, and it takes place in some, as the apostle speaks; and so also hath this very ordinance wrought in that very way, as divers instances might be shewn.

4. Jesus Christ always fulfils what he hath promised: Mat. xviii. 20, 'I will be with you, and in the midst of you,' either to bless this my ordinance by giving repentance, or giving up to a reprobate sense.* So as excommunication hath usually its effect one way or other, the man is given up unto Satan; and if it have not that direct effect of terrifying of him, so as to bring him to repentance, he is given up to a reprobate sense, that Satan entering into him as into Judas, so that he turneth a persecutor, as was frequent in the primitive times, that men once excommunicated turned persecutors; they forsook the assemblies of the saints, which was a step to the sin against the Holy Ghost, Heb. x. 25–27. When they were thrown out, they would come at them no more, and so were given up unto Satan for ever.

Obj. In Mat. xviii. 17, all that is said is only, 'Let him be to thee as an heathen and a publican.'

Ans. 1. There he speaks in the language of the Jews, and so expresseth excommunication only by what casting out of the synagogues was amongst them; as elsewhere Christ expresseth the ordinances of the gospel, under the Jewish phrase, 'Leave thy gift at the altar,' Mat. v. 24. Now the Jews did not know what it was to be delivered unto Satan, and therefore no wonder if Christ did not expressly speak of it in that place of Mat. xviii. 17.

But, 2, one place expounds another, and that which he calleth there, Mat. xviii. 17, 'Let him be to thee an heathen and a publican,' is in 1 Cor. v. called a delivering unto Satan.

Then, 3, this delivering unto Satan was exemplified in the punishment of Judas, for after he was gone out (as it is judged by Piscator and others, he did not receive the Lord's supper, but was sent out) presently the devil entered into him; he was a branch cast out, John xv. 6.

4. Though our Saviour Christ expresseth it to them in the Jewish language in Mat. xviii. 17, yet to the same apostles when this ordinance of excommunication came to be exercised in a church, his Spirit expresseth more fully what was the intent of that ordinance, not simply to throw a man out, to avoid outward converse with him, and in that sense to be as an heathen and a publican, but to be a delivering unto Satan. So that as the

* Parkerus de Polit. Eccles. lib. cap. 5.

church of the gospel in the privileges of it exceedeth that of the law, and that privilege they had in the synagogues, so the disprivileging of a man from the communion of the saints under the gospel hath an higher punishment than the synagogues knew.

5. When Christ said, let him be to thee as an heathen and a publican, he expresseth there not so much what the church's censure pitcheth upon, but what the consequent is, viz., the manner of their converse afterwards towards him, therefore he saith, let him be to thee; he saith, not only let him be to the church, but to thee; he expresseth it by what is the consequent, but in 1 Cor. v. 5, he expresseth the formal sentence, when the apostle saith, 'No not with such an one to eat'; he expresseth there indeed the consequent of the sentence, but delivering unto Satan is put into the sentence itself.

I shall urge one argument more to prove that excommunication is not merely an human ejection out of a society, but an ordinance in the church established by Christ's institution, because Christ hath given us express rules for church admonitions and censures; we find as direct rules chalked out for the series and order of proceedings therein, as any state can take for ordering proceedings in civil causes.

1. For the matter of Christ's censures, what we are to censure in men, and how we must apply those censures, we have our limits and rules in the word, so as we need no orders or canons to be made to make new matter, or the chief matter of church censures; for plainly it is told us that sin only is the subject of church cognisance, that it is a transgression of some law of God: 'Them that sin (says Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 20) rebuke.' Now, what is sin and not sin, the word is the sole judge of, and a perfect rule of.

And 2. It is scandalous sin that is the matter of censure, sin judged so by common light, and received principles; sin that goes afore to judgment, that you may read afar off, 1 Tim. v. 24. Doubtful disputations and sins controverted are not to be made the subject of church censures; for if the weak are not to be received to such, then neither are they to be cast out for such. Instruction may be used to consciences ignorant, as the phrase is, 2 Tim. ii. 25; but admonition only for sins taken for granted, and professed to be sins by the light of nature, and the common light of saints, 1 Cor. v. 1, 8, 3; 'For how else shall all fear'? 1 Tim. v. 20.

2. For the ways of dealing with such sinners, we have admonition, excommunication, and rejection prescribed.

(1.) Admonition: 'Them that sin rebuke,' 1 Tim. v. 20, and that not privately (if the sin be open), but publicly, afar off, to the end others may fear.

(2.) For excommunication we have warrant, after admonition: Titus. iii. 10, 'After the first and second admonition, reject,' which, in 1 Cor. v. 5, is called, 'delivering unto Satan,' &c.

(3.) We have order given for the degrees of proceedings in these, as orderly as any law can make provision, for the indemnity of men innocent and just, proceeding in any civil court in order to amend men.

1. If the sin be private, so as thou alone knowest it, 'That thy brother sin against thee,' Mat. xvi. 11, 15, 'Go and tell him his fault, between him and thee alone, if he hear and repent (as it is Luke xvii. 3), thou shalt forgive him,' and it shall go no further. This provision hath Christ took to preserve the reputation of persons, so to mend them as not to blaze their faults; and this not for one so sinning, but if seven times, that is, never so oft, Luke xvii. 4.

2. If he neglect to hear thee, that is, repents not, then take two or three and tell him of it afore them, and if he denies not the fact, and yet repents

not, then thou hast two or three witnesses of his not denying the fact, and yet of his obstinacy and hardness in not relenting, and of his impenitency; so it follows, 'That in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established,' that is, brought into public.

Therefore, 3. Now the matter, though but private at first, is ripened for church cognisance: 'If he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church.' But if it were a sin that is public, that it is, though privately committed, yet made known, commonly reproved, and so commonly known, as it is 1 Cor. v. 1, then the church is to take immediate notice of it publicly, without telling it in private; and those that can accuse, should impeach, as 1 Cor. v. he shews, and also 1 Tim. v. 20.

But, 4, if it be a sin that is suspected, and cannot be proved (whether commonly reported or private), and that by two or three witnesses, the officers are to cast it out of the church proceeding, and not to receive it: 'Receive not an accusation,' so as to proceed in it, unless it appears evident by two or three witnesses. This rule is given about admonishing officers, 2 Tim. v. 19; but it regards also every man else, Mat. xviii. 16. Then, when any sin is thus made of public congnisance, 1, they are to admonish; 2, to excommunicate in case of obstinacy and impenitence.

To conclude all in a word: if Christ had not settled by his institution the order, discipline, and government of his churches; if he had not given established rules for church censures, admonitions, and excommunication; if a certain platform of church government had not been fixed by him, we should have no warrant to endeavour a reformation, when the order and discipline of the churches of Christ is impaired, and almost lost; for there would be no rule to go by in such a reformation. And without a rule of divine institution, there could be no setting things right when amiss, no διόρθωσις, as the apostle calls it, Heb. ix. 10. Nor could we produce any warrant to advance the spiritual sceptre and kingdom of our Lord Christ, if we did not know, by the rules and laws of his own institution, what it is.

BOOK II.

Of the divine institution of a congregational church.—That it is not secondary, or consequent upon a charter given to the church universal, as virtually included therein, but is immediate and proper to it.—That Christ instituted such a church in Mat. xviii. *and gave the power of the keys to it.—That such congregational churches were primitive and apostolical, proved from the instances of churches planted by the apostles.—That the constitution and order of such churches, is most fitly suited for the edification of the saints, and most exactly accommodated to their various conditions—That Christ hath not only instituted a congregational church, but hath appointed what the extent and limits of it should be.*

CHAPTER I.

That the institution of particular churches is not virtual only, or secondary, and dependent on the charter given to the church universal, but immediate and proper to them, as particular churches.

THEY who assert the general church to be a political body, seem to be divided into those two several ways of explaining it: 1. That it cometh to be a political body *ascendendo*, so making a congregation to be *ecclesia prima*, a church first designed in the institution, and which the institution falleth upon; but yet, that by the virtue of the same commission, that saints make up a particular church, many churches may make up one church, and more of those churches may make up a greater church, for appeals, &c. And so, by the like reason, the universal church cometh to be a political body, the national or provincial churches being but *ecclesiæ ortæ*, removes from, and representations of those that are *ecclesiæ primæ*, the first churches, which are congregations. This opinion I shall consider when I come to discourse of the nature of synods, and their subordination.

2. Others form the institution to be *descendendo*, as asserting the first principal charter to be given to the church universal, so as that is by institution first a church, and particular congregations have it but by a derived right, as lesser leases have theirs out of a greater charter. And the reason that is given is this, that when the church universal was but so many (or if it were again reduced to so small a number) as might meet in one place, they met by virtue of being the church universal; but that it afterwards was multiplied to so many as that they must meet in several places, which is the occasion of forming particular churches; this is accidental and occasional, and so they are to be regarded as one church still, and so that first fundamental institution goes on. For number or multiplication of churches is not the object of God's institution; for God ordained not first that churches should be many. If these many particular churches are framed, it is with *proviso* and *sub conditione*, namely, only when they are so far multiplied.

Nor did Christ give such command, that when they did arise to such a number, they should make several churches; only necessity doth that, which yet still proceeds by virtue of the general grant.

But to refute this, consider, 1. That if there had been a time in which the universal church was so small under the New Testament, living also together, as they might have met in one place, they had not met by virtue of their being the universal church, or being a mystical body to Christ, as the church universal is; for they had been a church mystical unto Christ, though they had not so met, even as the church mystical now is a body to Christ, though it never doth thus meet. Yea, those saints who then made this church universal might have worshipped apart, and singly, and God might have ordered it so; therefore, that they should meet, and meet together fixedly for supernatural ends and ordinances, this dependeth over and above, upon a special will of God superadded to this universal church as such. If, therefore, when the universal church was no more than could meet in one place, it must have had for those fixed meetings, and the privileges of them, a divine appointment, and if it met then, it must be by virtue of a special institution; then, afterward, when it was divided into many congregations, they must meet by a special divine institution too. If the universal church was no more than could meet in one, yet they must then have, for those fixed meetings, met by a special institution and privileges, and afterward, when they are many, they met by the same special institution also; and so what at first suited their condition, when they were no more than could meet in one place, suiteth their condition afterward, when they are multiplied.

2. They could not then meet *qua* universal catholic church, for the universal catholic church is called such in respect of its being in all nations, both Jews and Gentiles. Whereas the institution of a particular church is the same, whether there be no more saints than can meet in one place at once, or whether there be more. When they are many, those many do set up several congregations, upon the same special ground that the universal church did set up a meeting. And the universal church did so meet in a congregation, by a special superadded ground over and above their being a church universal, for it further depended upon God's will, that they should all meet thus together fixedly; for they might have met but occasionally sometimes, and they might have met in several companies, or they might have worshipped privately, and God's ordinance might only have been so administered; for if they meet for these ordinances *qua* church universal, then in heaven they should meet for them too. So, then, that they should meet in one fixed society for public worship, is by institution. And,

3. This institution of meeting together, was rather made and suited for the saints when multiplied, than in respect of their being one body as an universal church.

For, 1, under the New Testament there never was a time that we know of, after the Jewish law came to be dissolved, that this universal church could meet in one; for although not at Jerusalem, yet surely in whole Judea there were more scattered up and down than could have met in one place.

2. Under the New Testament, when the church universal is multiplied to all nations, in respect of which it is called the church catholic, by way of distinction from the Jews, then it is so scattered as that they cannot meet together, no, not by way of representation, So as, indeed, this pretended principle, that institutions should mainly fall upon the church universal, is such as was never practised, nor extant *de facto*, neither at first nor at last.

Then, 3, we may observe that God did frame the institution of his churches, according to what, in the wisdom of his counsel, he hath determined and foresaw would fall out. His institutions are such, as he in wisdom knew would best suit the condition of saints in all ages to come, under the gospel. He therefore ordered particular congregations, as the most commodious seat of public worship, government, and order, and as the best and fittest security to preserve the saints from scandal, and also the means of maintaining among them the most entire kind of communion which could be attained.

That particular congregations do not meet as assemblies for public worship and ordinances, by virtue of a charter given first to the church universal, is evident from these reasons.

1. If they do meet by virtue of the general charter of the church universal, and they needed no other warrant than that, then if they meet occasionally only, some saints together at one time, and others at another, and not fixedly, whether for government or worship, they do thereby satisfy the obligations they have by virtue of the general warrant. And, indeed, to make running churches and societies of saints up and down in the world, would more satisfy the obligation of the general charter, and come up more nearly to it. Therefore, for them to have a fixed special tie to particular churches in a constant way, when the churches are many, must needs be by a further special institution.

2. If they thus meet by virtue of their being the church universal, then they met by virtue of it only in all times, and then afore the law was given; and so the same government that is now pleaded for, from the notion of the church universal, should have been then. And then, likewise, after the law, the Jews should have met by the law of the church catholic; and if so, there should be now the like meeting for public worship of the whole church as was then, viz., three times a-year. Was their meeting by virtue of their catholic communion, or as they were a nation? As they were a nation, surely; for if multitudes out of other nations had been converted, they had not been (as the Ninevites, and the like, where they had not been bound to the ceremonial law, neither were the Jews themselves, that lived out of the land, dispersed) bound to come up to the Sanhedrim. And suppose that they had been the church universal, yet that they were cast into a national way was by institution, over and above that universal consideration, as they were the seed of Abraham.

3. If the institution of a particular church depend on the charter first given to the church universal, then where there are more of believers, and more of elders, there would be more of the keys, if they had them by virtue of the universal church. For why? There would be more of the universal church in such a body. The institution, therefore, must fall primarily upon their being a particular body to Christ, meeting in his name, by his special commission, though the persons be but two or three, that is, a few in number; which argues that he doth not put his institution barely upon their membership or station in the church universal, but upon the formality of their being his body thus united; his blessing is given to them, as formed up by institution, whether they be saints more or fewer, as among the Jews also it was in their cities and towns, as well as they were a commonwealth in their nation.

According to this asserted charter of the church universal, whenas he saith, 'Tell the church,' Mat. xviii. 19, it should be meant primarily of the church universal, for the institution and rule for church proceedings would fall first upon it. But he speaks plainly of a particular church (and the Christian

church being as then to be gathered when he uttered it, if he would have made a charter to the universal, then had been the fittest time to have expressed it) for he declareth his institution there, when he had but a few disciples about him, and those with him, and yet declareth his institution for all ages, to tell it to that next church whereof a man is a brother. And if the church universal had been intended here, then the church of the Jews had not been intended as the pattern, which would overthrow the main assertion of our presbyterian brethren.

5. The truth is, that the meeting of the universal church is but occasional, for in all the ages that the church was to run through, it hath seldom been, yea, could never be. And when that which we call general councils have been, that they were rather for matter of doctrine than for government, or for appeals about persons, and that the institution could not fall upon. It is true in Mat. xvi. 18, the word *church* is taken indefinitely, and for the church universal, but yet not as an institution political, therefore he doth not say, he will give the keys to it, but unto Peter, as representing both saints and ministers, to be divided into several bodies, as afterwards Christ should appoint it.

CHAPTER II.

That the grand charter of church government, or the power of the keys, is granted not to ministers in particular only, excluding the people, but to the whole body of believers.

If any were to set down the model of any government whatsoever, the first and most necessary thing is, to set out first what commonwealth, corporation, or body politic, should be the *substratum*, the seat of that government, in and among whom it is exercised; and to set out the bounds and extent thereof, by which the jurisdiction of that government is limited, and unto which, as the subject matter thereof, all the particulars of that government are suited and proportioned, as the building is to its foundation; and also the situation and measure of the ground which they make the seat thereof. Therefore, in the inquisition after that order and frame of government which, we conceive, Christ hath instituted for his church, it is most proper to begin in seeking out what kind of body or society it is which should be that proper, adequate, entire seat and subject of this government, what the bounds and extent thereof are wherein Christ would have his government exercised, and within which confined. I call the church *sedes*, or seat, not in allusion to that ancient phrase used for the subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which phrase yet strengthens this use of it, but in allusion to that Scripture phrase, 1 Tim. iii. 15, where he calls the church ἑδραίωμα, that is, the 'seat or ground of truth;' and as of truth there, so, say I, of worship and government. This, therefore, as the foundation, shall be the subject of discourse, and upon the finding the true abutments hereof, doth the ending and determining of most of those suits and quarrels of this age about church government depend. The first charter granted by the founder, and the patterns of those master builders the apostles, and the proportions of those primitive churches, must be our guide herein.

Begin we therefore to inquire what is the true purport of the first grand charter of all the rest, and what help that will contribute hereunto; as we find in Mat. xvi. 19, 'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

1. Where, first, he no sooner mentions (and it is the first mention) a new church to be builded by him under the New Testament, but he, together therewith, makes mention of keys, both as means of building it and of governing it, following the metaphor of a house therein. And Peter having newly made a confession that Jesus was the Son of God, he being declared and owned by him as such, Christ utters himself again to him, as the Son of God indeed, speaks of building and contriving anew of his house, as a prerogative proper to him as the Son, which to the same purpose the apostle in like manner allegeth: Heb. iii. 3–5, 'Christ as the Son over his own house, is the builder thereof,' which prerogative he here holds forth, saying, I will build my church, and I will give keys. The church he intends is the church of the New Testament, which (the Son being himself come) was to be moulded and built anew by him, especially after his ascension. And the keys he means are 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' (as the state of the church under the gospel is called), which, to shew he is the Son, and hath all power committed to him, he professeth to dispose of anew (as the keys themselves were new) to another sort of persons than before; the keys of knowledge and government having been before in the hands of high priests and Levites, &c. Now as the church was to be of a new frame, and the keys were new, so he declares a new disposement of them to other persons than the former. So that this place strengthens the assertion that Christ as the Son is the builder of his church, Heb. iii. 3, 6, and the institutor of all power and means of building in it; and also it proves that the frame and government of the church under the Old Testament, delivered by Moses to those that sat in his chair, cannot be a set rule of the frame and form of government of the church under the New. For Christ the Son being come, shews his prerogative by declaring the old to be done away with, saying, I will build, I will give the keys, &c. Whilst he speaks of a new, the old is done away; yea, the persons to whom, and the extent and limits of the power are to be set out by him, as well as what those keys shall be by which he will build and have his church governed, and he therefore says to Peter, 'I do give to thee.' In that he singles him out electively, it argues his special designation of the subject or persons (whoever they be) to whom he will bequeath them.

2. That Peter here, in this promise of the keys for the future to be given, should stand in a representative respect, and not merely personal, all writers in all ages and all sides, though in Peter's name laying several claims unto these keys, do universally acknowledge and observe. Some say the grant is to Peter only considered as a believer, having made confession of his faith, that Christ was the Son of God, and therefore representing the church of believers, as unto whom all church power should be first given. Others assert this grant to be made to Peter as an apostle, and so representing the apostles and ministers only. Thirdly, others, as the papists, vindicate a personal privilege of Peter's above all other apostles, yet therein representing his supposed successor, the bishops of Rome. Learned Cameron almost alone would have it that this was a personal privilege to Peter, wherein none others did succeed him. Thus much seems evident to us, that our Saviour Christ speaks unto Peter under a double consideration in these words, ver. 19, and the words before. The one was merely personal, and therein he speaks to him under his own proper name, Simon son of Jonas, and so pronounceth him blessed, for that his confession, which accordingly expressed his personal privilege (which under that name he had even from circumcision) of his being saved, without any mention of the gift of the keys. But then, secondly, he gives him withal a new name, and 'I also say unto thee, Thou art Peter,'

or rock, which was a new and mystical name, as the words following shew, 'upon this rock.' Πέτρος and πέτρα answering each other as *fides* and *fidelis*. And under this new name now put upon him he gives him a further privilege, 'I will give to thee the keys,' namely, as thou art Peter. This was not so much in a personal as a mystical consideration, upon which his new name was given him. And to strengthen this, it may be observed that God in first delivering his promises and grand charters unto all sorts, singled out some one man in whose name the grand charter should eminently run. So Adam was fixed upon, when God, in his name, gave the earth unto the rest of the sons of men. So Abraham was singled out to represent the church, both of the Jews and Gentiles, but especially to represent the Jews who were his children, to whom God gave the promises of the Land of Canaan, as representing all his seed, and of the whole world as representing all the saints, Rom. iv. 13. And accordingly he did upon it change his name from *Abram* to *Abraham*. Thus in like manner here doth Christ deal with Peter. He first blesseth him personally as *Simon*, then changeth his name to *Peter*, and so bequeaths this charter of the keys, in his like representation of others, to whom in him the grant is made, as well as to himself. For Peter was still more forward than all the rest to utter his faith that Christ was the Son of God. Elsewhere indeed (as in John vi. 69) he speaks in the person of all the apostles, but here, where this grant is first uttered, singly in his own; and on this occasion Christ honoureth this great and eminent confessor of him, as that man in whose name this great charter should run, he bearing therein the persons of all sorts that were to have any portion of power, whether of his apostles, extraordinary officers, or of ordinary officers, as also of the church of believers, and even of all to whom ever any portion of the keys was for the future to be given: yet so as this honour was peculiarly his, and he is singled out to be this common representer of all others under the New Testament, which honour he doth bear to this day in his name, even as Abraham had the like honour under the Old Testament. And to evidence this the more by the event, Christ did in an especial manner honour Peter to be the founder; as it were, and beginner of the new Christian church (as Cameron hath observed out of Tertullian) when he converted that multitude at one sermon, Acts ii.

Neither yet is this to be understood, as if those keys were given unto Peter to convey the keys unto others derivatively, but he takes them representatively (and therefore it was not necessary that all power should be in Peter's person as an apostle, otherwise than representatively) and that not *repræsentatione reali*, as if he received all power for the church over her, as a king or a parliament doth, who represents a commonwealth (as the papists and episcopal divines and others say of the officers, that they represent the church) but only *repræsentatione typicali*, a typical representation (as Baynes distinguisheth), that is, that power which the church, or others that were officers unto her, should receive in themselves afterwards, he now received in a representation both of her and them, as a common person standing for and spoken to for all the rest. And Christ therefore doth not say *I give*, which if he had spoken to him as an apostle, constituting him such thereby at present, he would have done, but *I will give*, for the future, because many of those whom Peter represented here the power was afterwards to be given to, when the Lord should be pleased to declare it by himself or his apostle.

3. Further, as all this is spoken of Peter here as a representative person, so in an indefinite and general way. And as it is the first great promise and charter, in which all particular portions of power, to whomsoever afterwards distributed, are included, so likewise as the other first and great promises of

God use to be, this is as comprehensive, so indefinite also, not designing at particulars. Such was that grant of the earth to the sons of men, whom afterward God divided into several nations, to whom by his providence, suited to his decrees, he set out the bounds of their several habitations, Acts xvii. 26, and in Deut. xxiii. 8. The like was that first charter made of Canaan to Abraham, which was afterwards particularly designed out by lot to the several tribes, &c., whose right was yet all indefinitely comprehended, and intended in that first grant to Abraham. So accordingly all the expressions in this promise are general and indistinct, and to be taken in an indefinite and comprehensive way.

1. As first, where he saith, he will build his church, it is hard to know how to limit it, for he means all sort of churches; he means the mystical church, for he saith, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' which is only true thereof, for they have prevailed against particular churches, and may; and yet again he must include particular churches too, for it is certain that the mystical general church hath not the power and exercise of all the keys, but only as divided into particular churches, or if it might be supposed to have the keys of rule in general councils, yet not of the sacraments, not of preaching the word, for, as for such ordinances, that church cannot meet, and therefore exerciseth them only in several parts, and divisions of itself.

2. Those words, *the keys*, are a general comprehensive expression, answerable to that of the word *church*, taking in keys of all sorts, viz., the keys whereby the universal church, as such, is built and reared, that is, those means whereby men are converted and made members thereof, which God oftentimes blesseth in the hands of others than ministers. And they are therefore called 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' at large, not the keys of the church, as restraining it to a political church; and therefore (as Bellarmine, though to a wrong purpose, urged, namely, for the transcendency of the pope's power above the church, yet for the thing itself rightly) is larger than that in Mat. xviii. It is there meant of a church political, but the keys here in Mat. xvi. 19 have relation to the opening *the door of faith*, as in Acts xiv. 27 it is called, and therefore implies all means of conversion. And accordingly the opposite thereunto is *the gates of hell*, which shall not prevail. And yet again, on the other side, the keys or the power that is given to particular churches are intended, for this is the general grant, afterwards settled in Mat. xviii., where 'Go tell the churches' is mentioned. And the binding and loosing spoken of there is comprehended under the binding and loosing which is spoken of here; so as churches of all sorts, and keys of all sorts, keys given to churches in a way of discipline, and to private persons to build up one another, keys given to officers of all sorts, apostles and others, are all here intended. And therefore Melancthon well saith, *Claves ecclesiæ datæ sunt, sed juxta electionem a Christo institutam.* And it is certain that in Mat. xviii. he instituteth a church power, as touching the persons to whom it belongs, distinct from Peter's, and that of the apostles as such; and yet whatsoever church power there mentioned was to be in any, Peter receiveth it here. And as when we say all civil power is in a kingdom, it is meant, *sensu diviso*, the king hath one part, the nobles another, the people another; and the several officers of a kingdom, they have their part; and so it is here, and all at the first was now given unto Peter, as bearing the person of all these.

4. Whereas the controversy hath been, whether Peter represented the apostles and the ministers only, or whether he represented the church also, or whether Peter is here personally to be taken as the sole and single subject of a personal privilege; we say all these are here intended by Christ

in this his first promise, uttering it himself in this indefinite way, which was afterwards to be further and more distinctly divided, and set out by himself and his apostles. So that whether Peter had it granted to him as an apostle, and as an apostle representing apostles and other ministers, we will not contend; but yet, that Peter had it also representing the church itself, and saints built upon the rock, the arguments are as convincing and concluding to prove it, if not more, than those that on the other side are framed to prove the words should be spoken of him as an apostle representing the other apostles and elders; and therefore we safely take in all. The main argument urged to prove that it is spoken to him as an apostle, is drawn from this, that the person spoken unto, viz. Peter, was an apostle, and the other apostles were present, and so intended; and therefore this grant here should be restrained to Peter and them as such. And the arguments for the other, namely, that ordinary believers also should be intended, is taken from the occasion and ground of Christ's speech, which was a confession of faith made by Peter, and therefore that Christ should take in, and intend other ordinary believers and confessors to have an interest in the keys, as well as elders and apostles, and accordingly to have been by Peter represented. So as the pleas of this suit (so far as concerns this place) do lie between the sort of persons spoken to, and that were present, and the qualification of that person as a believer, namely, and the ground of Christ's speech; and all the arguments that are brought to prove they were given him as an apostle, are not exclusive that they are not given him also as a believer. Austin's expression, *Non tantum Petro, sed ecclesiæ*, not to Peter (that is, as an apostle) only, but also to the church, doth rightly divide the share between both.

The occasion of the promise was Peter's confessing that Christ was the Son of God, which holds forth nothing proper unto ministers only, or himself as an apostle only; and therefore the privilege here must be common unto that sort that make confession of faith, as well as to ministers. It was a common faith confessed, not of what belonged unto apostles only, but unto believers; the promise is therefore suited unto the occasion. And this is a stronger inference than that other which is brought, that he represented the other apostles only, namely, because that they were present, whenas Peter here did not intend to speak it in their names, as in John vi. 69 he did; but rather, he steps out and prevented them, and therefore also Christ speaks first unto him in his personal condition, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonas;' and then in his representative condition, as representing those whose faith he had confessed, as well as the apostles, whom, if only or simply Christ had intended that he should represent, he might have spoken to them all as well as to Peter, they being then present.

And then, again, his name, *Petros*, *Peter*, which Christ here anew gives him, with the reason of it, viz. 'upon the rock,' &c., in an allusion to *Petra*, signifying one built on the rock, and so of the same nature with the rock, argues this to have been Christ's scope in promising to him the keys. This change of his name thus into *Peter* elegantly served to suit and answer the thing which Christ was speaking, namely, the building his church on the rock, whereon Peter, thus confessing himself, was built. 'Thou art Peter,' that is, Thou art built on this rock, thou art a stone in this rock, and unto thee as such I speak. And further, he doth not say, *Thou shalt be called Peter*, but *Thou art Peter*, that is, Thou art a stone, thou art built on a rock; and thus it answereth to his being a believer, which is all one as to be a member of the church so built, and therefore it is spoken of Peter, considered in the person of believers, built with the rest of the church upon the rock, as well as the apostles, whose privilege alone this was not; and it is

farther observable, that of all the apostles, this Peter, here spoken to, should, if only intended, alone use this very similitude to this particular purpose, and in effect apply what is said here of himself, *Thou art Peter*, to all believers, in 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,' &c.; as if he had said, It is not I only that am the *Peter* that Christ intended; it was not spoken to me, but unto you all. And his expression in 2 Peter ii. 1 is all one with this in his first, 'To all that have received like precious faith with us,' *i. e.* with me; as in 3 John 9 John saith, 'that receiveth not us,' that is, that receiveth not me. And almost all divines of all sides do thus far yield this: they say the keys are given primarily to the faithful, only they explain it and say, they are given *in bonum ecclesiæ*, for the good of the church, but unto the officers of it.

Obj. 1. If it be said that if they be given to Peter as a believer, then unto all believers, to women and children, and the like.

Ans. The answer is, first, when it is said the keys are given to a believer, it is to be understood not *reduplicativè*, as if only and to all such all sorts of the keys are given; but *extensivè*, that is, to Peter, as representing believers also, and not barely as an apostle, but yet such believers as after should be more specially determined to have their share in them. For they are given unto believers, in Peter representing such, according to Christ's disposement, after to be declared. It is an indefinite charter, to be formed up by him afterwards, only now declaring that those of that sort should have them. And Christ hath afterwards made a peculiar exception of women not to speak nor to usurp authority in the church, 1 Cor. xiv. 34; which being an exception, it must be from a rule, and so, *firmat regulam*, argues and confirms that the rule is, that males have liberty and power to speak and judge in some cases. And yet, secondly, even they have a sprinkling of the keys in their proportion, if you take *keys* in that large sense before explained; for the keys of conversion and edification may be, through God's blessing, in their hands. Their speeches and instructions in private may, and often do, convert and edify the souls of others; thus, Titus ii. 4, 'That the aged women may teach' (namely, by private instructions and the like) 'the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands.' And other of them may be instruments to convert or build up servants and children, friends, &c., in their families; yea, 'their husbands may be won without the word, by their chaste conversation,' 1 Peter iii. 2. Yea, and as members of a church, they have power to bind sin upon a man, in private personal admonition first, which is a degree, and in order to that public, if a man repents not, which yet personal admonitions of others to those not in church fellowship (as in England formerly) are not in order unto. For when a woman doth tell a man of his sin, if she makes it out and prove it, she tells it him with this bond upon him, that if he repent not, she bringeth it to the church; and so she binds him before and in the church, which she doth as a fellow-member, though not as a judge. And the same sentence that a woman hath thus pronounced in private against him, the same the church afterward ratifies, even as what the church ratifies is bound in heaven. The mistake of the objection lies in this, to infer that because women have not the authority, the public power of the keys, that therefore they have no power of the keys committed to them, whereas none have all that others have, not the apostles themselves.

Obj. 2. If further it be objected, that the keys are given to others than believers, as to ministers, though not true believers;—

Ans. The answer is: Yet so as that they are visibly believers, or they ought not to be ministers; so Judas was. And so if it be given to ministers only,

and apostles, it is supposed that they are faithful: 'The things that thou hast heard, commit to faithful men, that they may teach others,' 2 Tim. ii. 2. 'Just, sober, holy,' Titus i. 18.

Obj. 3. And if it be said further, that then they are given to believers singly, and out of church fellowship;

Ans. The answer is: Although they are here given to believers materially, yet formally, but as built up in a church, according as Christ should after order it. And if we speak of the judiciary power, elders themselves must needs be supposed to be set over a church ere those keys are given unto them; and so also what is granted to saints hereof, those keys must needs fall under the same supposition. But if we speak of the keys in a larger sense, so they are given to all and every one singly, whether they be in church fellowship or no. Now, Christ's grant here being general and indefinite, though it takes in all, yet each according to Christ's order; and so if the judiciary keys are said to be intended, they must be understood to be here given, as Christ afterwards should particularly design how they should be exercised, and that is, and can be, only in church society; and whether by saints or elders only, as they are rightly formed up into fixed bodies.

But for a conclusion, that which from this place we take along with us, towards the finding out the seat or subject of church power, is this, that the keys were indefinitely and materially here given, as well to saints as elders, in the person of Peter, in their several proportion, and afterwards were particularly determined, and held forth in the rules and examples set by the apostles.

CHAPTER III.

That before a company of believers or saints can become the formal seat of government, they must be united into the state and order of a church.—Reasons given why this is necessary.—A demonstration of it also from the example of the primitive churches, planted by the apostles.

This first charter, or grant of the keys, both to the saints and officers, being but indefinite, and given unto them as materially considered, as the command and blessing to multiply, is to men, Gen. i.; ere these can become the formal seat of government or public worship, there must be an orderly moulding and casting of this matter, both saints and officers, into several bodies or societies, for the exercise of these keys; which both the necessity of the thing requires, and also the examples in the New Testament do warrant and confirm unto us.

1. The necessity of the thing requires it.

For, first, otherwise there would be no order, which in the church of the Colossians the apostle doth so praise in them. He might have commended the saints in that city for their personal holiness, the teachers among them for their gifts, but he further rejoiceth in their order. And as order in any multitude or company of men primarily respects their union into a body for such ends and purposes among themselves as thereby they seek to attain, so here in this case *quod non est formatum, non est vere unum*, what is not formed is not truly one. This outward order is as the form that gives the unity. An heap of stones is not one body so properly as an house, although the parts in such a heap be homogeneal, and of one and the same kind; and the other consists of several materials, heterogeneal, and of several kinds, as wood, stone, iron, clay, &c. Yea, and the indefinite collection of all such materials into one heap are not a building, although they be squared and

fitted to be joined each to other, the beams and rafters by their tenons and mortices and the like; but that all these should be reared, and artificially erected into one building, it is that which makes them one body, in such a respect as the other are not.

2. Secondly, There would otherwise be no government at all. When God gave forth that law, Gen. ix. 6, 'He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;' over and above this indefinite commission given, it was necessary for the due and orderly execution hereof that there should be orderly societies of men, which should be the seat of a government by which this punishment should be exercised. God's way in this law, and so Christ's meaning in that gift of the keys, Mat. xvi. 19, cannot be like to that which Cain, through the horror of his conscience, feared, that any man or every man that met him might kill him. So neither is it indefinitely and promiscuously in the power of any, the next company of saints and elders, to judge an offending brother. And reason confirms this; for, 1, it is this form and orderly union of them into a body that makes any company the seat of government, and to have a power among them; and how can there be true government without a seat of jurisdiction in which it must be exercised? And that must be a body politic, according to the nature or kind of the government or polity exercised in it; if civil, then it is a commonwealth or corporation, &c.; if ecclesiastical, it is a church. A politic body is not made up by a multitude, for then a company of men at a horse-race were such; nor is it local union in the same place, for so at a stage play a throng or a crowd meeting would be such.

As forms in natural bodies are necessary to constitute them such as well as matter, so an union and moulding into one is needful to constitute a body politic; yea, a judicial power doth as much depend upon a formality of order as it doth upon a material qualification of persons. Take a company of ministers, or what sort of persons else, however qualified or denominated, they have not that power (which yet doth belong to ministers) indefinitely, or as any way met, but as formed up into bodies, as a power in a kingdom is not given to justices of peace indefinitely or promiscuously met, but as met according to commission in several circuits and distinct bodies from them. Burgesses of parliament, although lawfully chosen to be such, yet they have not parliamentary power, but as met in parliament according to the law of the kingdom; and the legality of the meeting doth give as much power and authority as the qualification of the persons. The authority is the result of union, and that legally and lawfully made, as well as it is founded in persons fitly qualified. Power in civil things is not so much given to mayors and aldermen as to the corporation; though the whole corporation exerciseth it not, yet it is their privilege, and they have such and such a power amongst them; it is not alone the privilege of the magistrates so much. That heathenish town-clerk of Ephesus, when the men of that city met in a promiscuous way (and perhaps the very same men of that city had panegyrical meetings for some acts of government, as election of magistrates and the like), yet because then they met not according to the order of that city, he says of it that it was an illegal ἐκκλησία, assembly.

3. Without this union and order of society, persons offended, that ought to complain, should not have whither to go to accuse, or the party offended be obliged to come. Nor would it be known whose the care and duty were to take on them the cognisance and judging of it, and whose sin it was if it were neglected. If these companies of elders and saints in a great city were fluid and promiscuous, and but like such companies as met at sights, or shows, or ordinances, without any incorporation or embodying, so as all being

in an equal liberty to go one day to this, another to that, company, &c., the same persons never met in one place unless casually and providentially. If twelve such meetings were in one such city, what shall oblige me to any one more than the rest? If I come to receive in any one, and they upon occasion would proceed judicially to deal with me, I might plead and say, I am no more accountable to you than the rest, I receive as often with them as with you, I belong as much to other assemblies as to you; and what have you to do to judge me more than they? And besides, it being (in this way) but providential that the same persons the offender is accused unto to-day should meet in one place another day, when all have an indifferent liberty, without any set or fixed incorporation, at the utmost it is but his forbearing to assemble with the company for that time or in that place any more, and retire unto those other, for he is at his freedom so to do.

Again, in this case, all that any of those companies can inflict upon him is but for that time to suspend him from communion with them; but to proceed to excommunication they cannot, not only because that imports a fixed company he is cast out of, but also because there is nothing to oblige him to attend that company to be so often admonished, as his sin shall become an obstinacy and fit matter for excommunication. Or what shall oblige those of this individual company to whom the complaint first came, that they in relation to and for his censure's sake should meet so often together, as that he may be publicly admonished by them so many times as in the end deservedly to be thrown out?

Yea, 4, this union and order must needs hold in such societies where the very punishment is to cast out of that body they were first within, for to cast out and to be within are correspondent, and answer each to other. Now the punishment to be exercised is not only a personal withdrawing by every man apart (as occasionally they should meet him), but a sentence publicly agreed on; and the sentence then in use in the primitive churches was to cast out of the church, John iii. 10 (as to expel and cast out of a city, or town, or family), which unless they were a body formed up among themselves, and he one within to them, they could not do.

II. As the necessity of the thing, so the examples of those primitive churches argues them to have been formed and fixed bodies that were the seat of worship and government, and do agree with these fore-mentioned principles.

First, The very denomination of churches (as of churches in Judea, Galatia, &c.) doth fall in with and confirm that first reason, that the saints and elders in those countries were cast into distinct and several bodies, and diversified by several corporations and relations. It imports not a distinction of them only as saints materially from the world (as the universal church whereof they are parts doth), but a distinction of them into several companies among themselves, namely, the universal and great church parted into several lesser companies and churches. Nor can those set and fixed titles arise from several promiscuous acts of meeting of these saints and elders providentially, but it includes, in the Holy Ghost's language, a settled state and incorporation in order to settled meetings. As the word *presbytery* notes out not simply a company of elders, but united into a body for government; so the phrase *churches* imports not simply a company of saints and elders met, but a stated society; so as when the union of their actual meeting is dissolved, they still continue the same, as the companies in London are still so many companies in state, though not in act, when every man is gone to his own house, as well as when met in their common hall. They are not only a body because or when they actually meet, but they are a body in order to meeting,

and there is a power in their governors to call them together again. And this also all the comparisons of an house to God, &c. (speaking of particular churches), implies, not simply acts of meeting, but a compacted state.

And that the churches then in the primitive times of Christianity were such bodies is evident, for, 1 Cor. xiv., the apostle calls not only a particular church an whole church (as likewise elsewhere, Acts xx. 28, the church of Ephesus is called the 'whole flock,'* and that at Corinth 'a whole lump,' 1 Cor. v. 6, each therefore making a distinct body, an whole and entire body, bounded within itself, as any other corporation is): but further, he speaks of that church as importing a stated union in relation to meeting actually: 'If the whole church,' says he, ver. 23, 'come together.' They were therefore a church in order to meeting, even when they met not, and are at home, in respect that the union and bond to the same laws and ordinances still remained. They were not a church simply because they met or when they met, but they, the same persons, were to meet because they were a church in a stated and constant relation. And suitably to this, he elsewhere says of them, 'When you are gathered together to cast out such an one,' 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, because they were to meet as a body in a constant way. And upon this fixed relation of each unto the whole, the apostle lays upon this same church this as a duty, as to meet for worship, so to stay each for other, in 1 Cor. xi. 33, and so not to meet in promiscuous several companies (as men at ordinaries) for the sacrament. There was therefore a set company known to each other, obliged to meet in one in a constant way, and so was an whole church in a fixed relation.

And such were all the churches the apostles wrote unto, and gave ordinances forth unto: 'So I ordain in all the churches,' 1 Cor. vii. 17; 'we have no such custom,' saith he, 1 Cor. xi. 16, 'nor the churches of Christ,' whom he praiseth for keeping the traditions he gave them, as 1 Cor. xi. 2; and rejoiceth in their order, and whom he blameth for occasion of divisions, in respect of their public meetings, as vers. 18, 19, 21, 22. Now all this argues that, as churches, these were bodies and societies in a fixed and settled relation, for his manner of writing is parallel with that, as if a king or his superior officers should write in his name to all corporations, shires, and bodies politic, giving out laws and proclamations and edicts to be observed by them in their assemblies, which, if they were not fixed and settled bodies, but only unfixed and uncertain fluid assemblies, they were not meet subjects capable thereof, nor of orders to regulate them. This also the state of the seven churches of Asia, whom Christ directeth those seven epistles unto, with several inscriptions to the several angels of those churches, evidently argues; they were fixed bodies, having each their elders, an angel (collectively taken, as the use of that phrase in that book is), in a special relation, to whom therefore, as to the mayor or alderman in a settled corporation, the letters are directed. And he blames them, as bodies or societies of men fixedly incorporate, for sins passed in their public transactions as they were a body, as suffering Jezebel to teach, &c. And further, he threateneth to remove the candlestick, Rev. ii. 5, that is, their church state, as they were a standing seat and subject of the ordinances of the gospel, as the Jewish candlestick was; for the seven candlesticks are the seven churches, Rev. i. 20. As these candlesticks were these churches, distinguished each from other, so these churches were the saints and elders, as candlesticks cast and moulded into a set and standing form, and so thereby made distinct each from other, though all made out of the same lump of the church universal, therefore chosen out as standing patterns of the frame and fabric of other

* Though it be not ὅλος in Acts xx., yet it is so elsewhere in other places.

churches then extant or to come. And as that and the like threatening concerns succession, so it further argues a fixed combination, that is the subject of guilt, for that combination continuing, though the persons then alive should all die, yet if the same sins continued in persons that succeed members of that combination, that church or body, in respect of the fixed state of it continuing, would inherit it; for by reason of such a fixed union or stated society or corporation, it comes to pass that not only a company of men are one body when their assemblings or meetings are not, though in order to such meetings, as well as when they are, but farther, that they continue the same body to succession, and so each of these the same church or candlestick, notwithstanding it may suffer alteration in increase or lessening, in respect of particular persons. Yea, though the matter, the gold, the persons that now make up one of these candlesticks, should all be removed by death or otherwise, yet the candlestick continued the same, because the same settled church state continued; as in this respect the company of mercers, or any corporation, is the same it was an hundred years ago, because of this settled order and union, and is capable of being threatened to have their charter taken away, their corporation removed, or the main privileges of it some way nullified, though the original persons do not still dwell in the same city.

2. And as in respect of public worship, so in respect of judicature; the churches then were bodies cast into fixed relations. This made the church of Corinth (as, 1 Cor. i. 2, it is called), a seat and subject of judicature and government: 1 Cor. v. 12, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' and 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' Here was, first, a set and certain judicature among themselves, as the word *judging* imports; secondly, a body, within which whoever was, he came under this judicature, for they judged them within, as corporations or bodies politic use to do them within themselves. There was something then that made a special relation, which was the ground of their power to judge this person, and brought him within the compass of their jurisdiction. And it is further expressed with a denial of power over others that are without, 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' I that am an apostle, that have the largest jurisdiction and commission, what have I to do in it? And his power and theirs did differ; for though he might judge as occasion was in any church where he came, yet he lays it as a special peculiar duty upon them, to have power over them that were within themselves; and that power belonged unto them, as the other belonged unto him. And the persons that are said to be within, to that church of Corinth to whom he writes, could not be the church universal, for then the church of Corinth should have had power to have judged all or any other churches of saints in the world, as well as itself, and so a part had power over the whole. There was, thirdly, a duty lay upon some persons among them, to whom this belonged, 'Do not ye judge?' and a sin that lay upon them for their neglect, which lay not upon another company, 'Do not ye judge them within?' And have you hitherto neglected it?

3. Thirdly, The special relation of elders to their churches, and the members in particular churches among themselves, doth evidence that not any company of Christians, but such as embodied together into and settled in the order of a church, are the subject and seat of this grand charter of the keys, or the ecclesiastical power.

(1.) The relation of the members among themselves doth evidence it, 1 Cor. xii. 27, where he descends from the discourse of union of the members in the universal body of Christ, which he calls *Christ*, ver. 12, to a

more particular enforcement of the duties of that special relation that was amongst the members of the church, as a particular body to Christ; and so to oblige each to other, not only by that general law of the universal relation, but further by virtue of a more special one contracted among themselves, being made a distinct and entire body to Christ in particular, by being one church. And so the obligation was not only doubled upon them, but further, the proportion of the general tie (which was more diffused) was contracted into a narrow and lesser compass, and as holding analogy with it, was so made stronger and more vigorous. Thus we understand those words to be a special application of that general doctrine premised in the former part of the chapter, which treats of Christ's body, the church universal. 'Now ye,' the church of Corinth, 'are the body of Christ, and members in particular,' in a more special relation; and so owe all those duties in a special manner, one to another. In this respect also, sometimes when the apostle hath occasion to mention a member of a particular church, he specifies it with a special distinctive relation, 'Epaphras, who is one of you,' Col. iv. 12; and Rom. xvi. 1, 'Phœbe, our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea,' is commended to communion with them, as standing in special relation to that church. So when he speaks of elders, a special relation to a particular church is intimated, which could not be unless those churches had been fixed bodies for state, and not promiscuous assemblies in respect of acts of meeting. Thus the same Epaphras, as to his common relation of membership in that church of Colossians, is mentioned, 'who is one of you;' as afore, chap. iv. 12, and also as to his more special relation as an officer of that church, 'who is for you a faithful minister,' of whom they had been taught the gospel: 'As ye also learned of Epaphras, who is for you a faithful minister,' and in a special relation your minister. He still held his relation of a minister for them, though for the present occasionally employed with Paul. Thus the ordinary elders were set over particular churches, and so had a special relation to those churches as elders of them; and the relation was the rise and foundation of their call to be elders, as Acts xiv. 23. The apostles, who were general elders in all churches, by virtue of apostolical commission, ordained ordinary elders in every church; and these elders were specially appropriated εἰς τους, *to them*, and were to take care of that whole flock which appertained to them, Acts xx. 28; and so they were entrusted with the care of them, and to watch over them, as those that were to give an account to God for their souls; and therefore they were their peculiar charge, Heb. xiii. 17. And in respect of this relation, the Holy Ghost directs those epistles, mentioned Rev. ii. 2, 3, to the several particular angels of those churches in Asia, who therefore had their churches assigned to them, for which they were to give an account, and more accountable for their sins, in which they are accordingly blamed.

And these elders could not have a special settled relation, if these churches were not cast into a fixed settled state, as churches under them; for the one are relations to the other; and therefore the Holy Ghost directs his epistles to the churches also, chap. i., as well as to the angels of these churches, for in their relations these two were commensurable.

4. And lastly, these elders and these churches were formed up into fixed and settled presbyteries, so 1 Tim. iii.; and the acts of ordination were not attributed simply to an indefinite company of elders (as promiscuously or any way met), but to a presbytery, which imports not simply an act of meeting by a company of elders, but (as the word is paraphrased by our translators, with respect to the Jewish Sanhedrim) 'the estate of elders,' Acts xxii. 5. As if we should say, The common council did ordain so and so,

it notes not out simply a meeting of a company of wise men in such a city, but as met in an united body. And if these presbyteries were a fixed and united company of elders, then the churches must needs be also, to whom they were a presbytery. And so this is a further argument than that former, which was drawn from the special relation of elders, singly or personally, or loosely taken, which was ordinarily fixed to be a settled church. But if further, we consider these elders as united into a presbytery, it yet more importeth this. For though it should be granted to be a truth, which some affirm, that every elder were an elder indefinitely of the church universal, yet every presbytery is not a presbytery to the whole universal (no more than every common council in each corporation is a common council for the kingdom, though each burgess met therein must be capable of being a burgess in parliament for the whole kingdom), but, as specificated, such must relate only to some particular church. If therefore the government were seated (as our brethren would have it) in presbyteries, yet these bodies must be fixed and incorporated. Or if in churches with their elders (or else nowhere), yet if their elders were presbyteries to their several churches (as is evident they must be), then those churches also were fixed bodies over which they were placed. Yea, and the Scripture doth, *in terminis*, in plain terms, attribute the act of ordination to a presbytery, that is, a company of elders united in their relation and in that action ; and as much to this their united relation, as to their being elders. And so the validity and legality of the act depends as much upon this as upon their being elders met ; as if a man should say, Such a thing was done by the common council, certainly he means thereby that it was done not only by men that are councillors promiscuously, in that sense as lawyers are called to give counsel, as occasion is, singly or apart ; but it imports they met as a common council, so embodied, that the act hath a legality, an authority therefrom. And the validity as much depends upon that incorporation of theirs according to a law, as upon their being men, and so qualified.

CHAPTER IV.

That Christ in his institution of ecclesiastical power, Mat. xviii., *hath granted this power of the keys only to saints embodied and united in the state and order of a congregational church.—That though it should be granted that Christ in this institution had a regard to the constitution of [the church of the Jews, yet it would be evident that he intended a congregational church.*

Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything which you shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or

three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Mat. xviii. 15–20.

There are three things may be proved out of this place. The first is, that church power is by Christ's institution. Secondly, that a particular congregation is there meant, and so we have an institution for it. Then, thirdly, that suppose there were a subordination of churches above particular churches, that yet the particular church should finally excommunicate, and that the supposed superior orders of presbyteries should not take it out of their hands.

1. The first is plain, that here is an institution of church power, as is evident by comparing it with Mat. xvi. 18, 19, where it is said, 'I will build my church, and I will give thee the keys.' He speaks indefinitely. That place affordeth this evidence, that Christ is the only builder of his church ('Every house is built by some one,' Heb. iii. 4), and of all things about the house: 'The builder of all things is God' (saith he), namely, Christ, who is God, as he had proved in chap. ii. Having spoken this indefinitely in Mat. xvi. 18, 19, here, in Mat. xviii. 15, 16, he particularly determines the seat and subject of this ecclesiastical power. Here, in Mat. xviii. 17, Christ uttereth himself definitely, 'Tell the church.' The *jus proprietatis* is in Mat. xvi. 19; the right of propriety is stated in the right of administration. The *jus executionis*, in Mat. xviii. 16. He doth not give it to saints and officers simply, but as formed up into bodies. Mat. xvi. holdeth forth that they are to be saints, making confession as Peter did. There is the matter of a church, to whom the keys is given; but Mat. xviii. holdeth forth how that these saints are to be formed up into several bodies or churches, and so to execute this power. Therefore he speaks of them as 'being gathered together in his name,' Mat. xviii. 20. Their being saints, or faithful, is not enough; but order is to be added to faith (as in Col. ii. 5), which order is held forth here, in Mat. xviii. ver. 15 to 20.

2. The words of Christ here, in Mat. xviii. 18, 'Verily I say unto you,' which are institutive; 'And again I say unto you.'

(1.) That word *Amen*, or *verily, est idem quod firmum et ratum*, shews the thing to be firm and ratified, as *Amen* doth also, being set to our prayers. And here so it is taken; for it is with a promise of power from him, confirming and ratifying of such meetings as he speaks of. And a promise to any thing that is beyond the law of nature implies an institution; for what is an institution but a setting up something with promise, to have a blessing in it beyond the efficacy of the thing?

(2.) 'Again I say unto you,' saith he, ver. 19. The word *again* is *additionis*, moreover, a superadded expression, as Mat. iv. 7, 'Again it is written.'

(3.) The words *I say* are institutive, or commanding with an efficacy; as they are used in Luke v. 24, 'I say unto thee, Arise.' And if they be only assertory (as some say they are), yet being spoken by the Son, of his own house, in his mouth they are edificatory, or institutive of it.

(4.) Jesus Christ giveth power to a brother to admonish, and that in an ordinary way, in order to excommunication; then bids him take two or three, and then tell the church. And it is not a matter of indulgency or liberty, or privilege (as Cameron observeth), that his speech importeth, for that is, whenas there is a benefit to one's self by it, which, if I will forego, I may; but what is spoken here is *per modum imperii*, by way of command, for it is for the gaining of a brother. And it is in order also to a court sentence, when it is brought to the church; and the word *established*, Mat.

xviii. 16, that is, the sentence shall be firm, and fixed, or ratified, confirms this to be his design and meaning.

(5.) To reckon a brother as an heathen, if obstinate after this course is taken with him, is an act of power, which, if Christ had not given, should not have absolutely necessitated it.

(6.) He saith, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name,' therefore it is an ordinance. What makes other things an ordinance, but that they are done in the name and power of Christ? Is baptising in his name an ordinance, and so gathering together in his name also? And *in his name* is all one, as in his power and authority, by commission from him; and to such ends and purposes as he hath appointed, whereof one is to throw out an offending brother. He speaks as the Messiah, that did anew form his church, and put a new title upon their gathering together; calls it 'assembled in my name,' as the Messiah is come in the flesh. And whereas before he did authorise the whole nation, and made the trust unto them, he reduceth it now to a fewer company, to two or three gathered together in his name. All assemblies, if they be not established by authority, are unlawful, Acts xix. 39. Therefore these assemblies that Christ here speaks of, must be established by the law of Christ.

And thus much may suffice to shew in general, that let it be meant in church power, whatever it is, it is by institution.

And when he saith, 'go tell the church,' he imports authority and power, placed in that company he calls a church, with which he invests them. The word *church* in this is an authoritative word, and the authority the church hath is his; and whom should she have it from, but from him? And therefore, in 1 Cor. v. 4, they are said to be 'gathered together in his name, and in his power.' And by comparing this place and that together, it appears that his intent is both institutive and directive, only with this difference, that in Mat. xviii., Jesus Christ speaks by way of directing a brother what to do when he is offended; and upon that occasion mentions what authority he would give unto his church, and assemblies of his saints gathered together in his name; but in the other text, 1 Cor. v., Paul gives forth the direction to the church itself, calling upon them to perform their duty, according to the power and authority given him by Christ. As an apostle, he commands them, when gathered together, to deliver such an one to Satan, and (saith he) 'do ye not judge them that are within?' That is, have ye not power to do it from Christ, is it not a duty lies upon you? And he parallels it with that power himself had, according to proportion. Now the power he had, all grant to be institutive, for otherwise, what power could one man assume over the churches of Christ? And so likewise without the like institution, what power could a church assume to deliver a man to Satan, which is out of their natural and moral power to do?

I shall now demonstrate that a particular congregation is meant in this, Mat. xviii., and that a particular congregation is there instituted, and instituted, too, as having that power of excommunication.

Now that a particular congregation is here meant, is proved first out of the place. The church intended here, is a church appointed for worship as well as for discipline. Not only because that meeting to pray is mentioned, as well as to correct offences; but because if that be a church which is appointed for worship, it were strange if Christ should in his first institution mention that church which is only for discipline, and not that which is for worship also. 2. Out of presbyterian principles.

And, 1, out of the place it is apparent that a particular congregation is

meant, take *church* to be interpreted by whatsoever you will that Christ alluded to, then in use.

There were many unformed sects, that had several companies belonging to them, that were of the same principles and regular order; who, although they held a general communion with the church of the Jews, yet the manner of these sects was to have their synagogues and schools (as Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and we read of the school of Tyrannus). And if any of them transgressed the principles of their order and sect, they were brought (as Grotius saith) before the whole; and so they were reproved ἐνώπιον πάντων, that is, before all. And now if this allusion be to such a church or company, then the people are taken in, such as should meet and hear; and so then, Jesus Christ so fixed his institution, as the people as well as the officers met, for even those sects supposed guides, who did bring it to the whole company of that sect, whereto a man belonged. Secondly, if the allusion were to this, then according to the liberty that was then given, of having disciples, our Saviour Christ had then a church upon earth which he spoke actually unto. For he had by him twelve apostles and disciples, who after grew unto one hundred and twenty. And, therefore, according to the law of those times, he directs them, that if any offences were among them, after two or three witnesses taken, they should tell it to this church. Although Judas had sinned, yet he had not so sinned, as to have witnesses against him, until his betraying of Christ, and then (as our Saviour Christ prophesied of him, John xv. 6) he was cast out as a withered branch. And then, 3, that phrase of *gathering together in my name*, is an allusion to that custom in those times; for the manner was then to call disciples by the names of those they followed, and their meetings by their names, as Herodians were so styled from the name of Herod. 'In my name' (saith Christ), that is, such as profess me, and set up such schools in my name, are to observe the rules which I set them, for their order and government. Christ here expressed how his churches should, after his death and ascension into heaven, be ordered under the New Testament. As it is said, 'the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith (Gal. iii. 8), made the promise unto Abraham;' and as God, foreseeing that when the Israelites came into Canaan, they should live in cities, and be a kingdom or a nation, accordingly ordered beforehand their government, and gave laws aforehand, for that nation of the Jews as such, when they should be in their own land. So here, the church of the New Testament, being to be multiplied and scattered, that they could not assemble in one, as that national church of the Jews did, Christ aforehand speaks, what he would have his churches under the New Testament to be; and his institutions are suited to what in his counsels and providence he had determined should be, and he knew aforehand would fall out.

2. If, secondly, the allusion be to the Jewish way that was appointed by God, and had been of old, then either the Sanhedrim is meant, or the synagogues, with the officers there. But in the first place, the Sanhedrim is not meant; for (as Cameron saith) that is never called *ecclesia*, a *church*, no, not by the Septuagint. But be it that this word had been used of it, yet private offences (of which Christ here speaks) were never brought to the Sanhedrim; but Christ speaks this of private offences, for it is, 'if he offend thee, then take two witnesses,' and then tell it to the church. Whereas there were but four cases which belonged immediately unto the Sanhedrim, and those were cases of difficulty, when the private judges in the cities could not end the controversy, who yet had full power to have done it. And then, in the third place, Cameron's reason why the Sanhedrim is not meant, is good,

because the evangelists do still call it πρεσβυτέριον τοῦ λάου, and that now only Christ should call it *ecclesia*, a church, when it is nowhere used by the Septuagint, under that name, would be very strange. Secondly, if his allusion be to the government of every town, this makes for the way of congregational churches. For every village had their government entire within themselves: Deut. xvi. 18, 'in all their gates.' If it were a small town, there were three elders (to which Christ here alludeth), and in the cities one and twenty. And from the towns to the cities there was not an appeal, but immediately to the Sanhedrim.

3. His allusion rather is unto the synagogues in every town, which were the ecclesiastical state. The books of Moses were read in every city, in the synagogues, Acts v. 21. For every city had their synagogue, and so then in this sense, to 'tell the church,' was to tell that particular synagogue (whereof they were members), both to people and rulers. Now that Christ alludeth to this appears,

(1.) Because that excommunication was exercised in their synagogues, not in the Sanhedrim. Indeed, the Sanhedrim might make a law, as a rule according to which men should be excommunicated; but the synagogues executed it, therefore it is called, 'casting out of the synagogues,' John xvi. 2. And synagogues were not governed by an association, but each synagogue had its rulers, John ix. 22; and in John xvi. 2, 'They shall cast you out of the synagogues.' And a synagogue was a particular assembly, such as congregations now: Luke vii. 5, 'He hath built us a synagogue;' Mark i. 21, 'Christ entered into the synagogue and taught.' And when a man was cast out of the synagogue, and would come into the temple, they used to say to him, when he would offer to enter into the temple (although they refused him not to enter thither, for he held communion still with the temple), May he who inhabits this temple give thee an heart to hearken to the words of thy brethren, that so they may receive thee.

(2.) In every one of these synagogues there were two or three officers. They had rulers, Acts xiii. 14, 15, xviii. 7, 17. And therefore Christ alluding unto this saith, 'If two or three agree.' They used to have three at least, that a major vote might cast it among the rulers. And they used to have two or three admonitions afore they cast out, and thirty days between every admonition.

(3.) In a manner, all other authority was taken from them, but what they exercised in their synagogues thus, or in the Sanhedrim, which dealt only in the great matters of blasphemy; whereas this authority of synagogues was for offences of brethren; and therefore it is still said, they should bring them into their synagogues when they questioned them, as Luke xii. 11. The Romans took away all other power from them. But here they could inflict punishments: 'They shall scourge you in their synagogues;' it was the place of their punishment, so Mat. xxiii. 34; they whipped in them, for they had no other courts left, Acts xxvi. 11. And they had rulers, for the casting men out from thence. And perhaps these meetings in the synagogues are those which are called *Synedria* in Mat. x. 17. And in Luke xii. 11, 'when they bring you into the synagogues,' is mentioned first, and then, 'unto magistrates and powers,' namely, the civil magistrate, which in Mat. x. 17 is rendered thus, 'They will deliver you up to the council,' or Sanhedrim, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and then follows their being brought to the civil magistrate in the next verse, 'and shall bring you before kings and governors.' And some interpreters say, that the allusion is here, in Mat. xviii. 17, to that synagogue government and worship, *ecclesia* and *synagogus* being used promiscuously.

(4.) These synagogues were oratories, places of prayer and preaching, therefore Christ doth also subjoin here, 'if two meet together, to ask,' or to pray. It is not meant only of praying when they administered discipline, for it is praying about any business, for they used to worship and pray in the synagogues, as well as to cast out of the synagogues; their worship and their discipline there being of equal extent. And the word that is used in this text of Mat. xviii. 19, *συμφωνήσωσιν*, shall agree, signifies a meeting, as well as a consent, so Gen. xiv. 3; and the words also that Christ useth, ver. 19, 'Again,' or moreover, 'I say unto you' (having spoken of discipline afore, and now of prayer), do hold forth the scope of this church to be as well for prayer as for discipline, and so to be understood of such a synagogue as was both for discipline and worship, or prayer. And then the addition of the last words, ver. 20, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them,' is the general conclusion to both; so that the meaning is, that whether they meet for worship or prayer (of which he had spoken, ver. 19), or for discipline (of which he had spoken, ver. 17, 18), Christ is in the midst of them. Now, as our Saviour Christ's allusion was unto that synagogue government and worship then extant, so particular churches and congregations under the gospel, in answer thereunto, are expressed unto us, under the word synagogue. They have that name, because unto them did Christ allude; and they suited his institution under the New Testament. James ii. 2, 'If one come into your assembly, it is in the Greek, *εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν*, 'into your synagogue.' He speaks of synagogues for worship, as in Heb. x. 25, 'Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.' It is there *ἐπισυναγωγὴν*, *meeting in a synagogue*, which is a particular meeting for worship, which is therefore called *the house*, that God hath under the New Testament, ver. 20, whereof Christ is said to be the high priest.

And, indeed, the analogy between their synagogues and our congregations holdeth exceeding far. They hold two or three officers that were rulers of the synagogue, and we profess, for kind, that there are three sort of officers, —pastors, teachers, and elders. And the Jews, in a manner for the substance, use the same expression concerning their synagogues; they had two wise men to teach, and one to discern; and therefore Christ saith, 'where two or three are gathered together.' And to be an heathen and a publican, and to be cast out of the synagogue, was all one; and the word *synagogue* and *ecclesia*, or *church*, are all one in the Septuagint; and so, consequently, to be cast out of the church, corresponds to their ejection out of the synagogue.

And to this hath Christ framed the constitution of his church under the New Testament, that it should be both for worship and government, as the synagogues were within themselves. And although these assemblies are called synagogues as for their extent, yet they are called temples as for their privilege. And this constitution of Christ suited with the primitive times of the gospel; for the Jews, being dispersed in several nations, they had synagogues in all cities, and an entire government within those synagogues. Yea, even in Judea, in some one great city, there was but one synagogue, as in Capernaum, Mark i. 21. Thus, at Antioch too, the Jews had a synagogue, Acts xiii. 14, 15, as also at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 1, and at Corinth, Acts xviii. 4, where the Greeks and the Jews were met in one. Now, the Christians being to be called out of all places, and being dispersed, as these Jews were, in all nations, Christ suited a government to these conditions of the synagogue-government, and answerably fixed his institution of churches, in imitation of the Jews dispersed, who had synagogues amongst all the Gentiles, in their several cities. Christ chose not the legal way of a national church, or of a sanhedrim, or of going up to one temple for a whole nation,

but he fixed on synagogues, as fitting his turn best, for he chose churches out of nations, and so did not hold to one national church of the Jews; and, therefore, we read of *churches* in Judea itself, and not *church*, Gal. i. 22.

And to strengthen this assertion, it may be observed that our Saviour Christ did not take nor follow the institution of the Old Testament, but the appendixes of it; as for example, in the Lord's supper he instituted the bread and wine, answerably to the bread and wine which were appendixes of the passover, and he refuseth the paschal lamb, and chooseth the bread and wine. So likewise, as the Jews used to baptize proselytes, so he refuseth circumcision and takes that baptism. Thus also as the synagogues were, as it were, chapels of ease to the great church, the temple, where moral worship only was, he lets the stately temple worship go, and the glory of a national government, and chooseth this mean way of a synagogue, but yet endows it with the privilege of a temple; that so whereas, before, God was worshipped in the mount and in the temple, he is now worshipped as much, and as truly, and as spiritually everywhere, and in every synagogue having the same privilege. And, indeed, Christ's way in the ordinances and institutions of the gospel was to choose that which, in comparison, was before to the Jews, and to the world, foolishness; thus he chose the foolishness of preaching, and instead of taking the high priests and rulers, he takes fishermen, &c.

4. But yet, though Christ might speak in the language of the Old Testament, it is not necessary that his meaning should be that the churches in the New Testament should be formed according as the old were, but the contrary. Our Saviour Christ had said before, in Mat. xvi. 18, 'I will build my church;' and, as he speaks of new keys that are to be given, so by that he prepares their minds to a persuasion, that he would have a new church distinct from the former. And then afterward, here in Mat. xviii. 17, he tells them more distinctly, that they should 'tell the church.' And if it be said that they understand not what he meant by the word church, or that they could not apprehend that he meant by it a particular congregation, and that they knew not too what he meant by keys, for certainly they knew not the particular ordinances which he intended under that general expression, the keys of heaven; and so neither knew they what this new church, in Mat. xviii. (to which they were to tell) might import; the answer is plain, that the Holy Ghost was to come on them, to tell them afterwards. And, indeed, our Saviour Christ spake of many things which they then understood not, as of the resurrection: Mat. xvi. 21, 'I will destroy this temple, and build it in three days;' and also, 'that his kingdom was not of this world,' John xviii. 36. So when he washed his disciples' feet, they knew not then the meaning of it; but he saith, he would 'send them the Comforter, which should tell them all things,' John xiv. 16, and chap. xvi. 30; but yet it was necessary that Christ should deliver the main foundations of all those truths which the Holy Ghost afterwards should enlighten them in. Moses delivered many things in the wilderness concerning the government of the church of the Jews, which they could not so well understand, till they came into the land of Canaan; and though they knew not the place that God would choose, yet many of the laws that Moses gave depended upon it. But,

2. Our Saviour Christ had, according to the liberty that then was given unto all several sects (though we call not his such), built a church; he had a little flock, as he calls it; and as he began to institute baptism, and began to institute the Lord's supper afore he died, so to institute this church; he began it as other ordinances, afore his death, and he did cast Judas out of it. And,

3. The manner is oftentimes to speak in the language of the Old Testament when the same thing is not meant. As when Christ speaks of the person offending, Mat. v. 22, he expresseth the degrees of punishment to several sins, under the names of three courts amongst the Jews, and yet he meaneth spiritual degrees of punishment. Thus, too, in 1 Cor. ix. 13, the whole service of the sanctuary is called the *altar* ('He that serveth at the altar, must live of the altar'); yet there is no such altar erected amongst us, as was amongst the Jews. And the prophets also, prophesying of the times of the gospel, spake of our ordinances under the notion of the Old Testament, yet meant other ordinances anew to be instituted; so in Isa. lxvi. 23, 'They shall go from one new moon unto another.' Though under the gospel we have not monthly feasts and meetings as they had, yet the meetings that we have are expressed thereby. And so now here Christ speaks of a church, that as the Jews had a church, so likewise, under the New Testament, there should be a church to which offences should be brought; but that officers alone should be that church (supposing that the ruling officers are called the church in the Old Testament), it followeth not. For the word *presbytery*, which was given to the eldership of the great Sanhedrim of the whole nation of the Jews, is now given to the presbytery of every congregation. So as though he useth the same word to express the institution of the new churches of the gospel by, yet it follows not that it is of the same kind with the old, or that it runneth in the same way. But,

4. We are rather to interpret it by what kind of churches we read afterwards that the apostles erected. As Moses was interpreted by the prophets, so is Christ's mind in this to be known by his apostles; for the Spirit came on them, and did reveal unto them Christ's mind and intention. The trial, therefore, will lie upon this, what bodies, and consisting of whom, are called a church in the Acts of the apostles, and in their epistles.

What that church is upon which the institution of Christ falleth, is not to be argued merely out of the analogy of the Old Testament, for that will not set up an institution in the New. But when we have found out what manner of church in the New Testament Jesus Christ hath instituted, we are then to consider the analogy of that form thereunto, so far forth as Christ hath applied it.

Now both in the phrase of the New Testament, assemblies, consisting of elders and people, and of the saints, are called churches; and in the words also of Mat. xviii. 20, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name,' Christ tells us his meaning of a church. And unto this church, say we, doth the analogy of all the church under the Old Testament hold, if you take the due proportion; and as the excellent stories and allusions in the Old Testament are brought into the New, to set forth things that come under the New, in the book of the Revelation, in their several proportions (therefore, speaking of Rome, he calleth it spiritual Sodom, and Egypt and Babylon, &c.), so we find that all the types of the Old Testament are applied unto these assemblies. Thus as to the temple, which was the seat of worship, and the sacrifices there, congregational assemblies have carried away the analogy of them by Christ's institution; for they only are the fixed public seats of worship, where spiritual sacrifices are offered. In congregations, the living stones are built up together, to offer up living sacrifices, acceptable unto God, as in 2 Peter ii. 5, Eph. ii. 22. And unto these assemblies are the same promises made that were made to the whole nation of the Jews, when they were a church encamped in the wilderness: 'Upon all their assemblies shall be a cloud, and a pillar of fire,' prophesying of the gospel, saith the prophet Isaiah, chap. iv. 5. And all the privileges which that

nation had as a church (take them in a spiritual respect) hath every congregation of saints now. This, therefore, is called the house of God, over which Christ is an high priest, Heb. x.; which, in ver. 25, he interprets to be the assembling of themselves together. In the compass of such an assembly also hath Jesus Christ contracted appeals sufficient, for first (says he) tell him of his fault thyself, then take two or three, and then go tell the church; and then he is bound in heaven, as the supremest judicature, Mat. xviii. 15–19; and God hath so advanced the state of the New Testament above that of the Old, that as the glory of the second temple exceeded the first, so doth the glory of the saints now in these assemblies excel all former. Every believer is a priest now; yea, the allusion in the company of saints assembled for worship, in Rev. iv., is unto the twenty-four priests that were over the twenty-four companies of priests. And the officers now are, as the four beasts in Ezekiel, Rev. iv. 8, and are as angels rather than priests, called therefore the angels of the churches, Rev. i. 20. The saints all are a royal nation, and the name of the city of God is written upon every assembly. The great presbytery or Sanhedrim of the people is the presbytery of every congregation. Every church is a city unto God; it is the city of the living God; it is the holy city, and hath a government within itself, of elders within its own gates. Yea, here is the synagogue-government also, unto which the allusion also is; and these assemblies are so called, as I proved in the foregoing chapter. Yea, and as God chooseth the mean things of the world under the gospel, so he chose that synagogue frame, because the worship therein was wholly spiritual and moral; it was not the seat of ceremonial worship, as was the temple. The government of the synagogues was natural, to cast any person out of themselves, as all bodies have by the law of nature, with a punishment suitable annexed, viz., to keep such from the esteem of worshippers, and that they should be accounted as heathens and publicans. Thus Christ hath chosen a way more spiritual, more natural, suitable to the communion of saints, that hath less pomp and glory in it. He hath taken this Bethlehem, that was the least, the lowest of the governments amongst them, and hath made it the greatest, and endowed it with the privileges of all the rest. It hath both national and temple privileges, and Sanhedrim privileges also; it hath the spirituality of them all. There they have the Lord's supper instead of the passover; there they have the altar, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, &c. What glorious things are spoken of in Jer. iii. 14–16: 'You shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind,' &c.; 'I will give you pastors, according to mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a tribe, call them out, and bring them to Zion.' That Zion is where the pastors are teaching, therefore meant of congregations. He doth not take nations, but select out of nations, out of cities and tribes, saints here and there, and formeth them up into congregations, because they have pastors that feed them; and in such congregations is the feeding of the pastors with knowledge and understanding. And this succeedeth the ark of the covenant, having the privileges thereof. It is a prophecy of the calling of the Jews under the gospel.

And yet if that judicial government (as we may so call it), that was in Jewry, were the pattern of all church government future, although it would indeed then, by the analogy of it, erect a national assembly over the lesser churches, yet even that would conduce more to the establishment of the congregational way we contend for than our brethren will yield them, and will militate against the presbyterian pattern as it is practised, and that in these particulars. For,

1. First, each town, as well as each city, had all government within their gates as much as cities; and the elders in the towns were not to appeal to the elders in the cities, but immediately to the national assembly. In Ezra x. 14, there were the rulers of all the congregations (which was all the whole nation) mentioned, and the elders of every city, and judges thereof; city, according to the Hebrews, was every little town. Thus Moses is said to be read in every city in the synagogues, that is, in every town; for they had synagogues in villages, Acts xv. 21. In Deut. xvi. 18 (saith he), 'Judges and officers shall thou make thee in all thy gates,' that is, in every town; and therefore the rabbins do say, that if it were a big city, where there were one hundred and twenty families in it, there were twenty-three sat in the gate; if it were less, then but three, for there was no court consisted of less.

2. Secondly, those towns were not ruled by a combination, but had a government entire within themselves, unless things were too hard for them.

3. Thirdly, the appeals unto the Sanhedrim was only for the decision of law-causes, in a doctrinal way (as if that the judges of Westminster Hall should inquire of the parliament for the meaning of a statute; and were bound to pronounce sentence according to their interpretation of the law), though still the judgment of the matter of fact, and to pronounce the sentence itself, was to be done by authority and jurisdiction of each town, like as we also contend that all censures should be by particular congregations.

Obj. If so, then their government was not uniform.

Ans. Yes, only in lesser proportions; in the smaller towns, they had three rulers, and in their cities and greater towns twenty-three, the law of God not determining how many elders should make up the judicature, either in the one or in the other; as also in congregations, God hath not determined how many, but, according to their proportion and necessity, hath left a liberty of choosing a greater or lesser number.

CHAPTER V.

That though it were granted that the power of the keys in Christ's institution, Mat. xviii., *was given to the elders or officers, and not to the people, that yet in a greater probability of reason, the officers or elders of a particular congregational church are meant.—That in all probability, too, the institution of such churches was designed by him, because their conditions and order best suits the ends of the edification of his saints.*

If by *church*, in Mat. xviii. 17, were meant the officers, yet still the officers of a particular church, for there is a presbytery in every church. And the mention of two or three doth rather carry it to that meaning. So that if by *church* should be meant the elders, yet the question will return, What elders, in relation to what church? To a particular church, say we. Thus when it is said, in James v. 14, 'Send for the elders of the church,' it could not be the elders of a presbyterian church. Our presbyterian brethren acknowledge that particular congregations are churches; they are the first of the name in this institution, and are first intended, and are therefore called *ecclesiæ primæ*, the first churches, even by presbyterians themselves. We are sure also that particular churches have the name of a whole church: 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 'If the whole church meet in one.' We are sure, too, that the first churches in all places were but particular churches, even in Jerusalem itself. The apostles did not forbear making a particular church in any place; they did not stay till Christians were multiplied, so as to make many

churches in one place. Now such a particular church, before churches ever multiplied, had a government within itself, by virtue of Mat. xviii. 17. And if so, if here be an institution, it falleth upon it, and it exercises its government as a church by virtue of its charter.

1. That a particular church is meant in Mat. xviii. is evident, because it is such a church that is spoke of, whereof a man is a brother; and now he is a brother first, and more peculiarly, of a particular congregation; that is the reason why you excommunicate him out of the particular church, when out of none of all the rest. And when you bring the matter at last to an issue, you tell the church of it more than any of the rest, for that congregation being a church by the order of Christ, it is to be brought unto that church first, which the offending person hath the relation of a brother unto. Now, see who are in the right, our presbyterian brethren or we; they think themselves bound to tell the church, because he is a brother of it, but not at first; whereas Christ saith, Tell this church first, and if he will not hear what that church says, 'let him be an heathen.'

2. The method that Christ here prescribeth evidently argueth it to be a particular church; for, 1, saith he, do thyself deal with him; 2, take two or three witnesses; 3, tell the church. This must needs be that particular church, that is, the next body, for that particular church is a church, and it is his church; and it is a body in ascent next to the two or three witnesses; and if there be any such thing as a church classical, that is a degree beyond it.

3. All that are for presbyterial government, do by virtue of this place in Mat. xviii. tell it to the congregational elders, the presbytery. And so then, that the particular congregation is meant in this, Mat. xviii., both their practices and principles do import; for they argue from this place by way of analogy. They argue from hence the power of many churches over any church, because, look what power the first church hath over a brother, that many churches hath over a church; and therefore, according to their own concessions, this first church is first meant as the measure of the other, and, therefore, what is said here in Mat. xviii. must be first true of the particular congregation. For they make a combination of churches, for to deal with offending or disagreeing churches upon this ground, that a particular church is that which is here appointed to deal with a brother. If, then, the argument doth run by way of analogy, then the power of their greater churches is fetched from the power that this particular church hath. And they argue that therefore they have an entire power over many churches, because that this hath an entire power over its own members; and that what power is in a particular church, is in the whole body of churches jointly. And therefore, by the presbyterial concessions and principles, the institution must first fall upon this church congregational. For if any man would argue from what power a corporation hath over its members, that the like power many corporations may have over that corporation, it would imply that that corporation hath an entire power over its own members; and look how much of the entireness of the power you take away from the particular corporation over its members, so much you weaken the argument and analogy for the power of many.

In a word, all the arguments of all sides,—of papists, that would have the pope to be the church; of the episcopal party, that would have the bishops to be the church,—all argue from the word *church*. And they say, that a diocesan hath power in a diocese, because a whole diocese may be one church; and so many elders may make up a presbytery over many congregations, because many congregations make one church. So as all these, and

the presbyterian government itself, can prove their claim only as they can make it out that they are a church. Now, particular congregations do, and may, put first in for it, that they are churches; therefore, as a church, they must have a power over their own members, as the other have over churches, according to their own principles.

4. The first and primary institution must fall upon particular congregations as the seats or bounds of the first power, whether the institution be supposed to fall upon them as churches or as a presbytery. If it falls on them as churches, the greater churches consisting of many congregations are but *ortæ*, or sprung of this; if it falls on them as a presbytery, they are but compounds and decompounds. The native and first genuine church is the congregational, the other are but representative churches, whenas this is more real.

5. As the institution of a congregational church in Mat. xviii. most suits with Christ's aim and design, the communion of saints, so it most agrees too with that promise of his presence, ver. 20. What kind of assembly is most likely to be pitched upon by Christ, to be made his court on earth, but that wherein he is worshipped; and where there is the personal presence of his saints, for whose sake he is present with the officers of a church, and not as they are officers abstracted from the church, or meeting without it? And, indeed, it was for the honour of the saints, and was becoming of their state under the gospel, that not elders alone, but that saints gathered together with the elders, should be those fixed bodies to which the power should be given: for so the style runneth, 'the churches of the saints,' 1 Cor. xiv. 33. And what is the church without the presence of Christ? And what is more a church, than that to which more of the promise of the presence of Christ is made? Now to the saints, and also to the elders, as joined and united in bodies with saints, is the promise made. Those promises, 'I will walk among you,' &c., 1 Cor. vi. 16, Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 37, is made to the bodies of saints. So then, if we take the state of the saints under the New Testament, where every one comparatively is said more to know the Lord, comparatively unto those of the Old, it is answerably in a way of comparison more suitable to reason, than if the government should be placed upon bodies formed up, the institution should fall upon such bodies as have both saints and elders. And if there were no other reason, yet this might be pleaded for it, that the officers have, though not formal power from the people as officers, yet a virtual power, concurrence, and assistance (through the promise of Christ's presence with them) as such from the presence of the saints, in respect of the execution of their office and the blessing thereof, which they do not carry about them alone, especially in such acts, wherein they do things as for the people, and which do concern them, as acts of jurisdiction do. Although, as elders dedicated unto Christ, they might have a blessing in preaching unto them, and that as elders, or in prayer, or the like; yet in all ministerial acts of jurisdiction that belong to a church as a corporation, they have a virtual assistance from the concurrence of the people with them, doing all this in their presence. Thus the elders among the Jews, besides the blessing of their calling, as being elders, and united into a body over that nation in a Sanhedrim or council, had also a blessing from the place where they should meet, the place that God should choose, as also their sacrifices had; and should the same Sanhedrim have met out of that place, they had not had that assistance, neither could the acts have been counted acts of jurisdiction. This principle the papists themselves seem to acknowledge, who make the assistance that the pope hath, when he speaks infallibly as a pope, to be not alone, but in the *cathedrâ*, in the chair; and

so in council with the cardinals; and so in a state or kingdom, though the ultimate concluding and ratifying of laws doth lie in the king, yet he doth not do it alone, but having all other estates of nobles and commons present, or else what he doth is not legal nor binding. Now so, under the New Testament, though all church power should be supposed to be formally in the elders, yet not as abstracted from the presence of the saints, which is instead of the place that God then chose among the Jews, in which they had an especial blessing and assistance. Nay, he hath now chose a better temple for elders to exercise their jurisdiction in, temples made of living stones, that is, churches consisting of saints, from the concurrence of whose spirits, prayers, and applications, the acts done by the elders in a church do receive their strength. So Jesus Christ is in the midst of the elders, because his promise is to be in the midst of the saints, their spirits join and concur in the act, and so there is an efficacy running along therewith. And this honour at least was meet to be given by Christ to his saints under the New Testament. For what though the elders be as the loadstone, yet as the virtue and efficacy of the loadstone depends upon its being set in steel, so the virtual blessing of the elders' actions in matters of jurisdiction (which are the highest acts of church government) depends upon their being in the midst of saints that concur with them. And therefore, in Mat. xviii. 17, it is said, 'Tell the church,' that is, the elders joining with, and in presence of the people. Although the eye is that member that doth see for the body, yet it hath the virtual efficacy that enableth it to see, from its being placed in the body; and as the eye cannot see out of the body, nor can one body bring in another body's eye to see withal; so cannot this power of the elders be carried out of its seat, nor a foreign power be brought in. And therefore, when the apostle says, in 1 Cor. v. 4, 'When ye are gathered together with the power of the Lord Jesus;' and so in 2 Cor. vi. 16, 'I will walk among you;' and in Mat. xxviii. 20, when Christ promised, 'I will be with you to the end of the world;' he speaks not only of ministers, and the successors of the apostles, but of those also that believe through their word, for so in John xvii. 20 he interprets it, and likewise in John xv. 16, 'your fruit shall remain,' and so be both with ministers and saints as successors of the apostles; this being the honour of the apostles, not only to have ministers to succeed them, but churches and believers also, with whom Christ is. And therefore in the Revelation, where Jesus Christ's presence in the church of the New Testament is presented, with allusion to that of the Old, chap. iv., although the vision is of the church universal materially considered, yet formally the representation of it is made as it is the seat of public worship, and therefore represented under the idea of a congregational assembly, as appeareth (as Mr Brightman and Parker and others have observed) in that it is set forth in order to acts of public worship performed therein. Thus there is the laver to wash in, as in the temple there was before they worshipped, unto which the apostle makes the allusion for meeting in the house of God for worship, Heb. x. 21, 22, 25, verses compared, 'Let us draw near with a pure heart and bodies washed,' which afterward (ver. 25) he expounds to be assembling themselves together. And in that Rev. iv., the four beasts, who are the leaders and the chorus for worship, when they fall down and cast down their crowns, the elders do so too. Now those assemblies, in which Jesus Christ hath thus set his throne and temple, they consist of elders and beasts having eyes, &c., that is, saints and officers,* for

* See his exposition on the 4th and 5th chap. Rev. in vol. 2 of his works. [Vol. III. of this edition.—Ed.]

such is the advancement of the saints now in comparison of those under the Old Testament, that they themselves are called the elders, and the four living wights are those four sorts of officers of congregations. The thing we cite it for is this, that the throne and presence of Christ is with the beasts, as joined with the twenty-four elders, and in assemblies made up of both. And therefore the officers are said to be set in the church, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and so to work still as set in the church, but they are nowhere called the church itself.

Yea, and though the apostles were made immediately by Christ without a relation to any special or particular church, and in order principally unto gathering and rearing up churches, yet the choice of one apostle was made in a congregational church consisting of angels and people, Acts i.; and Paul and Barnabas, though made apostles immediately by Christ, yet received their ordination in such a particular church, whilst the elders were ministering unto the Lord in the church of Antioch, Acts xiii.; yea, and they themselves ordinarily did not exercise any acts of jurisdiction, either of ordination or excommunication, but as still present in a particular church. They did not set up a court unto which churches were to come, but they rather came themselves and visited churches, ordained elders in every church, with fasting and prayer in the churches, and ordinarily they excommunicated not (though they might give general directions) but in a church. And however, if there might be cases wherein the apostles did excommunicate alone, yet they were very extraordinary, and no way to be imitated, as their miracles are not. They did not excommunicate when absent: 2 Cor. xiii. 10, 'Shall I come with a rod?' 'And when I come, I shall bewail some of you,' &c. As, therefore, the apostles did not set up a court out of particular presbyteries, so presbyteries are not to set up a court out of particular churches. Yea, in that only instance of a synod which we have in Acts xv., the transactions of the apostles and elders were in and with that church of Jerusalem, where the brethren also were present. Thus hath God honoured the saints of the New Testament, that the promise of the presence of Christ should be made to them when gathered together with their officers, and that he will be with the officers even as such for the people's sake. 'You know' (saith the apostle to the Thessalonians) 'what manner of men we were among you for your sakes,' 1 Thes. i. 5. They have not only a ministerial power for them, but they have a ministerial power through them, as having it for their sakes and by virtue of their communion, God's promise being to be in the midst of them by virtue of their presence. So as although they have not a power derived to them *ab ecclesiâ*, as from the church, yet they have it derived to them *in ecclesia*, in the church, and also instrumentally *ab ecclesiâ*; and although they act not the power that is in the church in their stead, and for their ease doing such acts as otherwise the church should (as those of the separation have held), yet the assistance of the execution of their power is virtually in the church, the promise being made to them as a church. Neither are they the church representative, having a power absent and abstracted from the people, as is the nature of all representations (for nothing is represented that is present), but the church itself is the *sedes*, the virtual seat, in which this power is exercised, as the body is of the actions of the principal members, the spirit, and strength, and vigour of the whole body concurring and assisting in the acts of all such members, and therefore excommunication is in the name of Christ, that is, as some say, *invocato nomine*, or of Christ called upon; and so as having the prayers of the people of God to assist, to put force and efficacy into it. And so ordination is done with fasting and prayer; and the prayers of the saints, the least saints, have as much influence

unto the virtual assistance of the officers in their acts before them as the prayers of the elders themselves; and, therefore, the presbyterial acts that are abstracted thus from the people have not that efficacy in them as when the body of saints and elders are joined together. So as the institution falleth not only upon elders, but upon elders and people as a body formed up of both, not only because all acts of worship and jurisdiction are for the edification of the saints as well as of the elders, but it is because that Jesus Christ will have the assistance of their spirits and of their prayers, &c., which have as much efficacy in them to prevail with him for a blessing as those of the elders had.

And in this respect the keys (as was said before) are given unto Peter both as a saint and as a minister, as both respects considered did meet in him, when the keys were given to him, so that the words *to thee* include both; so that at least the keys are so given to the ministers as to be exercised before and in the presence of the saints, having an assistance from the concurrence of their spirits and desires. The papists would have the keys given to Peter alone, simply and absolutely, only they say indeed for the church, but they do not make the church the subject to which the keys are given. Others do make the church the first subject to whom the keys are given, and not only for whom, but then they make the elders the representative church, and so that they are given to elders only to be exercised instead of the church. But we say they are given so to the church as that if they should not be the formal subject of parted power together with the elders, yet they are the virtual subject in which the elders should exercise them; and hence it is that the denomination of church is from the saints, and not given to the officers anywhere in the New Testament. The officers are said to be set in the church, but they are not called the church. For the church of Christ must needs be a body to Christ, that still is the *periphrasis* of a church. Now, as in 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'A body is not one member but many,' (and from thence it is rightly argued that a bishop is not the church, for he is but one); so nor is a presbytery of elders, although many, the body, for they bear not the immediate relation of a body to Christ himself, but are only the representation of his body. And as members of all sorts do make a natural body, not only members that are the principal, and rule the body, but also those that are ruled and ordered, so is it here.

And when Christ in Mat. xviii. saith, 'tell the church,' having first told the party alone himself, then brought a brother or two, as the sin of the offending party doth by this increase and grow more heinous, so the number of those by whom he is now to be rebuked, that are called the church, must be supposed to increase also, and therefore not two or three elders of a congregation alone. This last is the last and the highest remedy, and therefore the publicness must not lie only in respect that they are public persons, officers; for if it be told privately only in a consistory, it is as private as if it were told to two or three of the brethren before, or it may so be that the same elders had been taken to be the brethren that should admonish him. By the word church, therefore, is meant a greater company, and therefore not the elders alone, but the elders before the church, or rather the elders in the church, with whom the church is to join in the admonitions and rebukes of him.

If it be said that by making the people thus the church rather than the elders, it argues that more authority is given to the people than the elders in the church. The answer is, that that follows not; it only follows that there is more efficacy and virtue by reason of the church, and the presence of the elders in the church, although the authority should lie in the elders them-

selves, as the virtue by which the eye seeth lieth in the body subjectively and virtually more, though the eye alone is the instrument of seeing.

We argue also for this congregational institution to have been rather appointed than the other, because that the bounds of this are certain, and are natural. God (as Baines saith) did never set a church but he did set certain bounds of it; as when he made the Jewish church a nation, he set the bounds of it to be that of a nation. Bellarmine argueth that therefore bishops are not *divino jure*, of divine right, because God did not make dioceses, and did not set them out by lot, as he did that of the tribes. And it was therefore a great contention among bishops of old, in those times of the fourth and fifth century, to whose jurisdiction such and such villages or towns should belong. In a word, the church is God's house, and God hath not left it unto man to frame his building to what proportion he pleaseth. Christ's body instituted (which is resembled unto the natural body throughout the epistles) is to have set limits of it, a *maximum quod sic*, and if it have all the parts that can have communion natural in the same common acts of nature together, though it be never so small, it is a perfect body; so as it hath a prescription, and bounds are set it, both for parts, and a *maximum quod sic* for degrees of stature. Now we have natural and set bounds for all instituted churches, in this way of congregational churches.

1. The same assembly that doth meet for worship is to meet for discipline, so that discipline and worship is of equal extent as touching the seat of it. Now the public worship is upheld by no other society in a constant way, nor can be, but by congregations, as many as can meet to edify in one place. And therefore by preserving of fixed congregations, God hath always preserved the essentials of a ministerial church, that although it suffered additionals of corruption in power, and of tyranny in popish bishops and popes and the like over them, yet still because the institution of a church fell upon congregations, there were true ministerial churches, and a true baptism and the like in all ages.

2. The congregational government hath its bounds natural from a sufficiency of elders, for the sorts and kinds of them. There is no sort appointed on purpose or alone for presbyterial government; as for episcopal, it was pretended there was; but even all the sorts that are, the seats of them are congregational; and where all are, there is a sufficiency of eldership, as we shall after shew. A congregational church had elders of all sorts appointed to it, as for what belongeth to worship, pastors and teachers, and as for what belongeth to men's lives, ruling elders; and there is no more elders but of these sorts in the greatest presbyteries over many congregations. Yea, the presbyteries themselves of many congregations must come furnished of all these sorts, out of their having all these sorts in their particular congregations. And our presbyteries cannot say, This church shall have a pastor, and this church shall have a teacher, and this church shall have a ruling elder, and so we will make up a presbytery out of all these; but every church is the seat *de jure*, by divine right, of all these, and every church hath need of all these, and Christ hath appointed these to congregations first.

3. We can derive the limits of congregational churches from the time that is instituted for worship, which is the Lord's day, which God hath fixed, and on which day no other churches meet, and so there is no set time for the exercise of a presbyterial church. It is Baines his argument against the bishops, that God did appoint for all church meetings under the law a time. And in Tertullian's time we read that the censures of excommunication were executed upon the Lord's day, and admonition and the like, though things might be prepared upon the week days. And the apostle's words in 1 Cor. v.,

that they shall cast him out when they are met together (he doth not bid them meet together on purpose), seems to incline to it. We know of no time that God hath appointed for all ordinances (whereof this is one) in a set way as the fixed season of them, but only this Lord's day, and upon this day presbyterial churches cannot meet for government.

4. That the duties which lie upon the relation of elders to preach and to rule should all be of the same extent (for the subject of them over which they are exercised), all this falleth in naturally with the institution of congregations, and elders over them, and the relation of elders to them. Men should not govern ordinarily beyond their preaching. This is evident from what the New Testament holds forth concerning elders in their relations to their flocks committed to them, the exhortations and charges to them of duties towards those flocks, founded upon that relation; as also the duties of their flocks to them, which is like to be the truest measure to find out the extent of their power and bounds of their flocks, whether for the ordinary way it be limited to one congregation or many. For those exhortations must needs be supposed suited to the boundaries of churches, and to that constitution and extent of relation wherein the elders of these primitive times were placed over them. And like as in the question about polygamy, what the Scripture hath said of the duties of man and wife, which were given and suited to the extent of that relation, as God from the beginning bounded it, manifestly evinceth that one man cannot have many wives, but one; so it may be argued as to the point in hand.

We have hitherto taken this for an undoubted maxim, that as a mutual relation is the fountain of all power, whether economical, civil, or ecclesiastical, so the extent of all power is commensurable with the extent of that relation. A master, as a master, hath power but over such servants of whom he may say, 'I am your master'; and they of him, 'We are your servants;' 'for what hath any man to do to judge another man's servant?' as the apostle speaks, Rom. xiv. 4. And so correspondently here, those elders that assume to be over either one or many congregations, must have, as the office of elders, so the relation of elders unto that one, or those many congregations, that they may be able to say, We are your elders, and you all our church; which two are, in Scripture expression, the relate and correlate, as king and kingdom, magistrate and commonwealth; all which falls in naturally for the set bounds of a church to be those of congregations. Whereas the bounds that the presbyterial way goeth by in all their subordinations are uncertain. You have not a certainty of number of officers. Some particular congregations have as many officers as some classes have had. Neither is it essential to that government that there should be many congregations; for they acknowledge that it may so fall out that there may be but one congregation that may have all the government in it in cases of necessity. But it is essential to upholding worship in all the parts of it, that there be a fixed congregational church.

And to make the jurisdiction of cities to be the pattern of ecclesiastical government cannot be a certain rule. For London, or greater cities (as suppose Grand Cairo was converted), would vastly exceed the lesser; and so the rule would fall in disproportion if you come in the country towns and villages. And indeed what reason can be given that God should proportion an ecclesiastical government to the boundaries of the civil? What! Because the cities under the Roman empire had a jurisdiction in them, and they over their suburbs, must their churches have so too? Hath God thus conformed his church unto the government of this world? And besides, all

states have not the like government, neither was the government of all countries a city government; and so there could be no certain rule for church government, if it were to be chalked off by these measures.

Neither is the government of nations a certain rule for that of the church, for the Jews after that rate, when they were two nations, should have been but one church. And, indeed, to form the institution of a church to that boundary had been to do it from what is accidental; for that they should grow up to a nation is accidental. God did find the Jews a nation entire, entered into a covenant with them, and so made them a national church. And if God had designed a national church under the New Testament, he would have given laws aforehand, as he did for the Jews when they should come into cities; so that, although they were now in the wilderness, and they were not to come into cities, till they came into Canaan many years after, yet he giveth a law for that condition of their being a nation and living in cities.

CHAPTER VI.

That congregational churches were designed in the institution of Christ, proved from instances of the primitive churches planted by the apostles.—The first instance assigned from the states and order of the church at Corinth.

Now, for the proof of all or most of the particulars of which I have discoursed in the preceding chapters, I shall bring, as the conclusion of all, the instance of the church of Corinth, which is the greatest and surest pattern, and the most complete of all other. It is the greatest pattern, because it answers to the institution in Mat. xviii. (as in the directions given to that church in the 1 Cor. v. and the phrases that about excommunication are put into it, being compared with that in Mat. xviii. doth appear.) As there Christ, in the promise that he makes to the church, when it bindeth sin, useth that phrase, 'Where two or three are joined together, I am in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20; so here likewise, in 1 Cor. v. 4, the apostle's direction runs in the same phrase, 'when you are gathered together.' As there Christ saith, 'gather together in my name,' so here the apostle saith, 'when ye are gathered together in my name, and with the power of the Lord Jesus.' As Christ there in his promise saith, 'I will be in the midst of you,' when ye are so gathered; so here, speaking of their gathering together, and throwing him out of the congregation, the apostle useth the same phrase, 'Take him from the midst of you.' As there, upon his being cast out, he is to be reckoned as an heathen and a publican, with whom the Jews would not eat, so here, if a brother be thus, they are not to accompany with him, no, not to eat with him. It is the surest instance of the ordinary power left in a church, because it was a church that was formed up, in which there was that ordinary government which was to continue to the end of the world. The instance of the church of Jerusalem is an instance, though of the first church, yet for the government of it hath this extraordinary in it, that it was then governed by the apostles, and therefore cannot make a pattern of the government of churches, and the power of elders therein, which should ordinarily and for continuance be exercised. But this is an instance of a church whom the apostle Paul leaves to their own power that is within them ('Do not ye judge,' &c., 1 Cor. v. 12), which they had exercised and practised. The church of Jerusalem also had many other things extraordinary, as that about having their goods common, &c. But the rules that he gives to this church are such as he gave to all churches; so when he speaks about laying up, not making their goods common, as at Jerusalem, but the

ordinary way that was to be observed concerning alms, 'Let every man lay up' (saith he, 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4, vii. 17) 'as God hath blessed him; and so I ordain in all the churches.' So as the pattern hereof is held forth, as that which held correspondency with the ordinances in all churches in the primitive times. And therefore is* an argument against the bishops; when they urged the instances of Timothy and Titus, presbyterian divines used to answer, that the instance of their government will not hold as a pattern for episcopal government, because that their government was extraordinary and for the present, but that we must take that which was the ordinary government that was left in the church, and make that the pattern. So we may say of the church of Jerusalem, and the government thereof at first by the apostles, whilst they were there, comparatively to this of the church of Corinth, that it is not so great a standing pattern to us. And this of the church of Corinth is the most complete pattern of all other churches, for he doth give direction almost about all sort of things concerning worship and government, and he utters more rules in his epistles to this church than any other. Thus he gives instructions concerning the sacrament, 1 Cor. xi.; about ministers' maintenance, chap. ix.; about matter of scandal and offence, chap. viii.; about collection for the poor, chap. xvi.; how to order their meetings, chap. xiv.; about covering and uncovering in their assemblies, he saith he had left traditions with them, and wherein they practised according to his traditions he commendeth them, 1 Cor. xi. 2. He speaks also of the power amongst them to judge of doctrine, chap. xiv.; and that they were a church that had power amongst them to order things for matter of worship in a decency—'Let all be done decently, and according to order,' 1 Cor. xiv. 40—and many things of the like nature. And last of all, it is the only instance and example of excommunication, the highest censure which the apostle gives direction about, and tells them they had power to do it, 1 Cor. v.

Now, concerning this church, there are all these things appertaining to a church, and the institution, and power, and government thereof held forth here; as,

1. Here is a church; so it is called.

2. Here is the qualifications of the members, a church of saints, 1 Cor. i. 2, conformable to which all other churches were to be as to the constitution of their members also: chap. xiv. 33, 'As in all the churches of the saints.' All the churches consisted of saints then, that were visibly such, as this of Corinth also did.

3. It was a church formed up into a body, as all those phrases imply, that they are called a whole lump, chap. v. 6, and a whole church, chap. xiv. 23, entire, complete within itself; which whole lump would be leavened, not only by way of infection by the incestuous person, but by way of guilt, if he were not cast out.

4. It was a body which had power to judge them that are within: 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' chap. v. 13, that is, within your own body, and society, and fellowship; therefore he saith, 'Put away from among yourselves,' chap. v. 13; therefore he useth those phrases, 'Fornication is committed among you; that he that did this deed may be taken from among you,' chap. i. 1, 2. It was a church formed up that had a jurisdiction over them within (and to them without he could not reach); and if they had power to cast out, they had also power to take in; it was therefore a formed body.

5. It was a fixed body in respect of the relation of the members one unto another. Why else doth he bid them to tarry one for another when they

* Qu. 'in'?—Ed.

were to eat the Lord's supper? chap. xi. 33. And that they should not take the sacrament alone, one company by themselves, and another company by themselves, which, if such a promiscuous unfixed way was lawful, they might have done, but they were to tarry one for another, that all the church might as one body at once receive. Now, if they had not been a fixed company, why should they have been obliged thus to have tarried, or who could have known who was absent and who present?

6. It was a church also that had elders over them, and those more than one; for speaking of the ordinary teachers that were ministers amongst them, some say (saith he), 'I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. i. 12; which he in a figure transferred to himself and to Apollos, herein speaking in his own person; but it tendeth to represent the persons of their teachers, the ministers to whom they did give maintenance, and were therefore officers: 1 Cor. ix. 12, 'If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?'

7. It was a church having set bounds, by which they might know who were within and who not; for when he saith, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' 1 Cor. v. 13, he doth not mean all saints in all churches, but it must be those within themselves. The bounds set by this, that they might be as many as could meet in one assembly, 1 Cor. xiv. 23. 'If the whole church be come together in one place,' &c.

8. It was a particular congregation. 1. This is evident from their divisions and contentions, which he findeth fault withal, as in a whole church, a whole body, 'that there be no schism in the body,' as he himself expresseth, 1 Cor. xii. 25, applying it to them, 'now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' He speaks of these divisions as being among those that did meet in one for worship: 1 Cor. xi. 18, 'For first when ye come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.' And this division was in their meetings in the church for worship, 1 Cor. xi. 22. And 'have ye not houses to eat and drink it, but despise ye the church of God?' the assembly of the saints, as he reproves their divisions and disorders in respect of the sacrament. To remedy these divisions, he bids them tarry one for another, ver. 33. Thus these directions concern them that are one congregation for worship, that use to meet in one place; and, chap. xii. 21, he saith they were members of one another in particular, in a more special relation. Now, that special particular near relation is that between those of the same congregation, where they meet fixedly for worship, by the consent and before the people, of which a man is therefore cast out, which he is not out of any other church in the world. 2. In this respect he calleth them a temple to God, speaking against them that caused divisions in the church: 1 Cor. iii. 16, 'The temple of God are ye,' and that he that went about to destroy it by divisions, God would destroy him. He speaks not personally of each member, as in chap. vi., but in respect of their church state, as they were a body, in opposition to divisions. Now the temple is for all the ordinances of worship, therefore called the house of God. 3. He gives directions to them as to a whole church, chap. xiv. 23, 'If the whole church be come together in some place.' 4. He speaks of it also as a church, which was to receive edifying together by the ordinances administered, so chap. xiv. ver. 5, 'I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaks with tongues, that the church may be edified;' so ver. 12, 'See that ye excel to the edifying of the church.' And if the whole congregation, &c.; and ver. 26, he speaks this in application to them all in respect of their meeting: 'How is it then, brethren, when ye come together,' &c.

As their assembly for worship proves them to have been a particular congregation for worship, so also the directions given concerning excommunication evince it, chap v.; for if they had been many congregations in respect of their members, 1. He would have written to that particular congregation whereof the man was, as that congregation (at least the elders thereof) which should (according to presbyterial principles) be told first of an offending member before he is brought to the classical. He would have named that church he was thus a member of, and written to it in a peculiar manner, whereas now he names none, but writes to the whole church. 2. When his directions come to fall upon the execution of the act, he doth not mention the sentence so much that was to be passed (according to our brethren) in the presbytery, but the act of execution, the act of delivery to Satan, was to be done when they were met together; which being to be done in that particular church whereof he was a member, if there had been many congregations there, he would have named that church as that in which it should have been done. Especially considering that the apostle in his writing pitcheth npon that solemn act of excommunication, which completeth the throwing of a man out, which, as all grant, is done and performed in the gathering together of that particular congregation, whereof a man is a member. 3. If there had been a classical church over many congregations where the elders meet, and a congregational church too, where this person did meet with the elders of his own church and the congregation, if there had been these two several sorts of church meetings, it would have been obscure and dark, unto which the apostle's directions should refer him; so as there would have been need of new distinctions of meetings as well as of elders and churches, when the apostle speaks but of one. Yea, the apostle saith, 'when met together,' 1 Cor. v. 4, namely, for other ordinances upon the Lord's day, that then they should give this sentence of excommunication. He doth not give directions that they should meet together on purpose for that, but as discipline is to keep worship pure and subserveth it, so also is it to be performed when the whole meet together for worship, that the person also may see out of what a communion he is cast. 5. Saith he, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' If there had been congregational churches, one whereof he had been a member of (for he could be but a member of one), and another classical church, here had been two *withins*, and which of these should the apostle intend? Our presbyterian brethren say, that the congregations have power to judge things within themselves, so that they must needs have one *within*, and why should not their *within* be the *within* here intended for the ultimate throwing out of this man?

9. This church at Corinth also had an entire judicature within itself, not depending upon the advice of any for sentence, and the like; for he speaks of the whole act, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' He useth the same word that he useth of himself and his power, 'Do not ye judge' (saith he), speaking of them; 'what have I to do to judge,' speaking of himself. And (saith he) 'when ye are gathered together with my spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver such an one to Satan.' So that they were not dependent upon the apostle, to come to him for the sentence; only in their neglect the apostle writes to them as an apostle, with this rule, to excommunicate such an one if the party be found guilty, which the apostle did never know but by hearsay, therefore could never pass a judicial sentence; but he finds fault with them, because they had not done it, for do not ye use to do it? saith he. Have not ye power to do it? 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' He doth not say, 'whom I have delivered unto Satan,' but directs them as a church of Christ having such power to do it.

Object. But it is objected by some that he did it for a trial of their obedience, and therefore their act was but an act of obedience in them, but the power was in him.

Ans. The answer is this, that the power might completely rest in them, and yet they obey the apostle in the act, as an apostle directing them, when they neglected it; as when a prophet in the name of God bade the magistrate to do his duty, though it is an act of obedience in him to do it thus commanded, yet he hath power as a magistrate in himself. And as in case a minister had neglected to baptize, and the apostle had sent to him or commanded him to have done it, the power of baptizing must be said to be in him that baptizeth.

10. If this church of Corinth had been a church that might have associated, it would have done it, for it had neighbour church near it, the church of Cenchrea, which was a port town to Corinth, as Leith is to Edinburgh; and Cenchrea was but a small town, not a city; but he writeth to the church of Corinth as an entire church distinct of itself.

That the people have an interest in judging, we refer that to the proofs out of this place, only we name it here to shew the completeness of this pattern, for the forming of congregational churches answerable to it.

CHAPTER VII.

That the name of a church given in the New Testament to congregational churches rather than any other (as is proved from several texts, 1 Cor. xi. 18, Rom. xvi. 1, 5, 1 Cor. iv. 17, *&c.), proves congregational churches to have been intended by Christ in his institution of a church, they most properly being both in name and nature such.—That a presbyterian assembly of elders cannot properly be called a church, evinced by several arguments.*

To decide the controversy about the divine institution of a congregational church, we may put it to the trial, whether single congregations with their elders have more the style of churches in the New Testament, than the elders of many congregations as assembled in a consistory, and let that determine it. Now that those congregations where God is publicly worshipped, and the preaching of the word, and the sacraments administered, are called each of them a church, is evident.

1. In 1 Cor. xi. 18, 'When you come together in the church,' he speaks of their meeting for the Lord's supper, ver. 20, and in ver. 22 he calls it so again. So their meeting for preaching and for singing of psalms, he calls it a church, chap. xiv. ver. 2, 19, 23; he calls it a whole church meeting for those ends. And there he gives not the name to the meeting or assembly, but to the state and company, ver. 28, for the rules he giveth there are for ordering of worship. So too in Rom. xvi. 4, saluting Aquila and Priscilla (who for his life would lay down their own necks), he giveth these congregations the name of churches; 'unto whom' (saith he) 'not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;' and ver. 16, 'The churches of Christ salute you.' Were those a company of elders over many congregations met? presbyterial churches, that did testify their thanks unto Aquila and Priscilla? Or were they congregations of saints and strangers also where Paul had been? He had related unto them his own danger, and Aquila's, and Priscilla's, exposing their lives for his; and can it be supposed that the saints, as making several presbyterial churches (who are so vast, like ours, as the people never meet to do it), did salute

the Romans, and Aquila and Priscilla? No; rather the several congregational churches might well have an opportunity to express the remembrance of them at their meetings. And the first verse and the fifth verse of Rom. xvi. will easily prompt us what manner of churches he meaneth, when he speaks of all these churches, that they were such as was at Cenchrea; 'the church which is at Cenchrea,' saith he, which was a small port seven miles off Corinth; and ver. 5, saith he, 'Greet ye the church that is (*i. e.* that met) in Priscilla's house.' Such churches as these were the churches of the Gentiles, who saluted them. If we come to the epistle of the Corinths, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 17, 'As I teach everywhere in every church.' Doth he mean these presbyterial churches or consistories, or congregational? Surely the churches where Paul still preached and taught must be congregational; for those assemblies are the subjects and seats of teaching. Take also the 17th verse of the 7th chapter, and bring it along unto the 11th chapter, 'So I ordain in all the churches;' and 'We have no such custom, nor the churches of God.' What! presbyterial or congregational? Let but this one consideration decide it. The custom of which he speaks that the contentions were about, was whether men should be uncovered or covered praying or prophesying. Now, all the meetings for worship where men and women, and where the angels (whether celestial or elders), were present, these assemblies where these ordinances were used he calleth churches, and he saith they had no such custom. And in these respects of meeting thus for worship they are distinguished, churches, and are made several churches, in the plural; and the general usages of all these churches, as constituted and ordered by the apostles everywhere, he here presseth. If we come to chap. xiv., he there gives order about prophesying in their meetings, into which strangers came and were converted; ver. 25, in which they had psalms and doctrines; ver. 26, where men and women were present; vers. 34 and 35, and therefore congregational meetings are meant. And he enforceth these directions he gives, with the examples of all the like churches in all their meetings: 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints,' ver. 33. These must needs be congregational assemblies and churches that met, for he speaks of the churches of the saints in common. Yet still, you see when he speaks of churches, yea, and of all churches, he speaks of them as such. And, chap. xvi. 1, when he writeth about laying up contribution for the saints (the gathering and disposing of which belongeth unto particular congregations, for the money, to be sure, is had from thence): 'As I have given order,' says he, 'to the churches of Galatia, so do ye;' he meaneth those churches of Galatia he wrote to, Gal. ii.; and these must be all congregational, for to order that collection belongeth to the several congregations. And ver. 19, 'The churches of Asia,' saith he, 'salute you.' Now, the many congregations under a presbytery, they do not meet to give salutes; they were therefore congregational, for with a congregational church in this salute he doth join them all; for he addeth, 'Aquila and Priscilla saluteth you, with the church that is in their house,' and why should we not think that he speaks uniformly in the same verse? This, we see, is the uniform style of the apostle when he speaks of churches, and of all churches.

2. As for the very name church in the New Testament, the place of congregational meetings almost in all languages hath the name of church, which name no places for general councils or presbyterial meetings over many congregations at any time have had. Not that we think the place of meeting to be properly called the church, but only καταχρηστικῶς, but yet it had originally its name from the meeting and the persons, which were properly

called the church, and from their stated condition to meet in one place, the place was so named. The clergy, indeed, hath been called the church, but not as met or assembled in any synod, but in the indefinite universal notion. But the place for the congregation is called the church, and the meeting of the saints hath the same name: 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches.' And their constant meeting in a fixed manner, and their state in order thereto, is called the church, Acts xi. 26. The sacrament also was anciently called σύναξις, *i. e.* the meeting, their meetings being said to be to break bread, Acts xx. 7. And in the great Bible the word *church* is always translated by *congregation*. And among the Grecians, Ἐκκλήσια was never used for a representative meeting only of officers, but of the people also; and so it is in Acts xix. 39–41, where the people making a tumult, it is called Ἐκκλήσια, although an unlawful one. And although that Christ, Mat. xviii., used the Hebrew phrase, yet churches being to be set up among the Gentiles under the New Testament, that phrase was used also which was conformed unto what theirs signified.

Also, under the New Testament, the name church imports the saints, the people, in a more peculiar manner; and therefore the meetings where elders are severed from the people are not called the church (Grotius in Mat. xvi. 18). And this too the expressions which are used in 2 Cor. vi. 16 shew; 'Ye are the temples of the living God; I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' And in Acts xii. 5, 'Prayer was made of the church,' *i. e.* of the saints, 'unto God for Peter.' Yea, this word church is taken for the people of Israel under the Old Testament, as Acts vii. 38.

3. We desire one place to be given where the name church in all the New Testament is given to the meeting of the elders alone. When the apostle speaks of all the churches, he gives them this appellation, 'all the churches of the saints,' 1 Cor. xiv. 33; but he nowhere expresseth the churches of the ministers or elders, no, nor of the apostles neither. Now, can we think that Christ in his first institution (Mat. xvi. and Mat. xviii.), which the apostles were to interpret afterward, and to give directions to us about it, meaned the word church in a signification different from what the apostles used? This would be a strange procedure indeed. How, then, can the elders lay a claim to the things, when they have not a sufficient ground to challenge the name of a church? As Parker, replying to Dr Billson's assertion of the keys being given in Peter's person to the church of ministers, very well says,* that it may be denied that the name church is ever in the Scriptures restrained only to the priests. Clemens Romanus, when he writes to the church of Corinth, writes to the church, and not to the presbyters (so the apostles too in their epistles), and writes also from the church at Rome. And when all the apostles were met at Jerusalem, yet they alone are not called the church, being but (as Moses is said to be, Heb. iii. 2–5, a part of the house, but nowhere called the house) a part of it: Acts viii. 1, 'The church was scattered except the apostles.' And indeed, if the elders were the entire church, then they were the house of God, whereas they are but stewards in it, 1 Cor. iv. 1. The apostles, though they had the care of all the churches, and that power in their hands which the generality of elders would never claim, yet they were but officers in the church, not the church. Many churches become one church to no officer in the world but Christ; but this pretence of the elders being the church, would make many churches one church to a company of elders, that they may govern them; and in relation to them as representers of the church, they must be called one church.

* Parkerus de Polit. Eccles. lib. iii. c. i., Clemens Epist. ad Corinth, p. 1.

What though the Old Testament frame or language be urged, we grant there was then a church representative, but the gospel knows no such now.

4. Surely a settled congregation of saints deserveth the name of church more; and suppose places could be found in Scripture where it is taken both for elders and the people apart, yet those meetings that have both elders and people of both sorts must needs have more of church in them. We can give instances that the disciples apart are called the church, in distinction from the officers. You cannot give one instance where the officers are called the church in distinction from the disciples. Certainly those that have the power have the name, and not those only that have the name equivocally or metaphorically.

5. A presbyterial church is called a church in relation to the people of those congregations, by their own confessions, when they interpret the church of Jerusalem, the church of Ephesus, to be many congregations (and the presbyterial's argument is built thereon), and that the people of all those congregations make one church under that one eldership. Now, it is strange that they should have a name of church only as they are the subject or object of discipline, and yet not so much as meet for that discipline actually neither, for so they cannot in a presbyterial church. The poor people of those churches have no communion of saints together herein, but such as they hold with all other churches that are not under the same presbytery; and yet they are, according to presbyterial principles in their officers, as representing them, a distinct church classical from all churches else. So they make use of the name from the people, when the people enjoy not the thing. The poor church of Jerusalem, Acts viii. 1 (when it is said that the church was scattered), affords you an argument that therefore there was but one church for discipline in Jerusalem, and in that respect it is called one church, when yet the scattering was not upon the presbyterial church that exercised discipline, but upon the people. They were not in the representative body persecuted, and yet though they were scattered as a church personally, and not representatively, and persecuted as a church personally, not representatively only, yet, according unto the presbyterian principles, they never met as a church personally, but only representatively.

If it be said that the people in classical assemblies may meet; yet it is no otherwise than the people in the next classes, which if they will may come thither, neither can they all possibly. You lay no more obligation on them to be present than you do upon the people of the next classes, and therefore in that respect the people of that particular classis are no more of that church than those of other neighbouring presbyters.

6. Those assemblies must have more of church in them, not only that have both elders and people, as congregations have, but that have constant worship in them, as well as government; and our presbyterians allow some government to congregations, *i. e.* to the elders of congregations. Worship is the chief end of a church. The formal notion of a church is to meet and communicate in worship; and where there can be no church-fellowship and communion to the edification of the whole, there cannot be a church, which may be illustrated by the natural body, to which still instituted churches in Scripture are compared. The eye, the hand, the head, they serve to several uses in the body, yet they are so united as they are all nourished with the same individual nourishment, and from the same stomach, and therefore this is a several body, having all these parts, from another body. So is it here in the churches instituted, they are such as have a communion in all the common ordinances, not only in the same kind, but in the same ordinances individually in a constant way. And the analogy of the church uni-

versal, and the churches particular, will help to illustrate this further, for the church universal being one body, is therefore fed by one kind of ordinances. As there is one body, so there is one baptism for kind. But the particular churches which are instituted, are such bodies as are fed with one and the same individual baptism, and one and the same individual Lord's supper, and so are one bread. In a word then, all can come to those classical churches, or they cannot come. If they come, then they are to make one church for worship too; if they cannot come, then there cannot be a fellowship for the edification of the whole; and when the communion of saints cannot be exercised, how can that be a church? Every church is a temple: Eph. ii. 22, 1 Cor. iv. 16, 'The temple of God are ye.' Now the temple did chiefly relate to worship, and was the subject of all ordinances, and the place where the Sanhedrim sat too. Answerably under the New Testament, the preaching of the gospel is called serving at the altar, 1 Cor. ix. 14. So 1 Pet. ii. 5, the saints are built up to offer sacrifices. God's house is called an house of prayer. The church is called a body to Christ: 'One body and one bread' (as was said afore), 2 Cor. x. 17, because they partake of one bread. But none of these do belong to a presbyterial church; they may pray occasionally, but the ordinance of prayer and constant worship is not there. Public worship lies in a communion, therefore it is to be only with those that can enjoy communion together. Yea, it is made the very definition of a church in the article of the church of England, which article we hope will never be changed, *Ecclesia est numerus fidelium* (so others also define it) *in cultu divino et disciplina communicantium*. The church is a number of believers communicating in divine worship and discipline, which a presbyterial church is not. The end of a church is that God may be publicly worshipped; he would not have instituted churches else, but principally for that, therefore he had congregations to do it, in which only it is done; and discipline superadded is but to keep that kind of worship pure, for government is but casting out of the body impure members; and therefore the great ordinance of discipline, of excommunication, is when they are met together, then they are to cast out from amongst them. As the intent of it is but to keep the worship pure, so answerably it is to be exercised then when they meet to worship; but presbyterial churches meet not for worship, but discipline only. Now as the body is ordained for meat principally, and nourishment, and is not ordained for physic but occasionally, so it is as to the state of the church, and therefore our divines make the essential notes of a church to be the word, sacraments, and discipline; but in these presbyterial churches the word and sacraments are wanting, and there is only government. The general assembly of the saints in heaven is a church in relation unto worship, and though there is no discipline there, yet they are never more a church than when they are there. And the apostle also, speaking of the church in the New Testament in Heb. x., saith that now there is an house of God, because there is an high priest, as well as before, ver. 21; and therefore (he saith) 'Let us draw near' (he speaks of public worship), 'not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,' ver. 25, and that in synagogues, for so the word signifies. And therefore in Mat. xviii., as discipline, so prayer is meant, and unto that is the promise of Christ to be in the midst of them more peculiarly made, and upon occasion of that. And indeed it were exceeding strange, that seeing the chief end of churches (which are congregations) is for worship, and that is the great business for which they are appointed, that if there were many congregations in those of Jerusalem, and those of Antioch, and the like, as is pretended, that there should not be mention of those many congregations

under the names of churches, but that discipline only must carry away the denomination of their being one church, though many in relation unto it. If there were one word in any of those instances, that there were many churches among them making one church, it were something; but there is not.

7. If such a presbyterial company of elders were a church, then discipline must merely constitute a church as a church. And so the objection against the episcopal government, viz. that for government alone there was an order of priesthood, namely, a bishop, will come with greater force here, as being very strange, that for government alone there should be a church instituted. And that discipline doth never constitute any kind of church is clear, because that which can *abesse, not be*, and *adesse, be*, without the destruction of the subject, will never constitute it. But so all diviues do say of discipline, that a church may be a church, though it be defective in discipline, therefore it is not that which doth constitute a church. And this principle the church of England is concerned to hold up, or else they will justify separation from them, as having been hitherto no true churches. But lo, here is a church, a presbyterial church, that is a church upon no other consideration but for discipline.

8. And add to this, that since presbyterial government makes congregations (which are churches, having each their elders over them) to be united for government unto one presbyterial church, let us but consider how many several churches it makes.

(1.) For, first, there is the particular congregations, consisting of people and their elders, for worship; they are one sort of churches.

(2.) There is, secondly, the eldership in every one of those congregations, which, according to their principles, is the church, for they interpret Mat. xviii. to be, tell that eldership, that is, tell the church; there is a second sort.

(3.) Then, thirdly, there is all these elders met in one for the government of any of these congregations; there is a third sort of churches. For these elders must be a church in a true sense for the people, or they cannot meet; and if they will challenge government by virtue of Mat. xviii., they must needs challenge to be a church. Now let it be considered, that those are not so much subordinations as national and provincial (which are but subordinations of the same kind, for the same ends), which consists of greater or lesser number of elders; but these are diversifications, several sorts of bodies going to make up one church, that it might be complete both for worship and government. And that it is a diversification is clear by this,

[1.] Because they are churches for differing purposes. The congregations are churches for worship, but the particular elderships and presbyterial elderships are only for discipline; now ends do diversify such bodies.

[2.] They are not the same churches by way of accumulation, as many things of the same sort laid together, which is clear by this, because the particular churches consist of people and elders, but these have elders of churches only. And as we urge in our argument that is drawn from elders, that this presbyterial government would make one man to be a double sort of elders, both a ruling and a teaching elder,—a ruling elder to some churches, and a teaching elder to others,—so also this makes them several sorts of churches.

[3.] It must needs make a diversification of churches. For as when many families unite into a city for government, there is a new relation and notion, so now here, there is the notion of a new church. And then,

[4.] Add to this (which heighteneth the absurdity of it), that whereas the

presbyterial church is made the complete church, they yet do want those great and main ordinances for which principally a church is said to be a church, as the sacraments and the like. So of the two, this greater church is the less complete, and therefore is less the church than a particular congregation.

And if you say they are made complete churches by being both, yet you make at leastwise two sorts of churches, as we said before; and you make a whole church more uncomplete as it is in the whole than it is in the parts.

If it be said that the church universal is one, and yet hath no ordinances as a church, as preaching the word and sacraments, and yet it is truly a church, we answer, it is not a church instituted in relation unto ordinances, but a church mystical in relation unto persons and personal graces.

This also farther addeth confirmation to us, that the supposition of there being many congregations in all, or many of those cities, under a common presbyterian government of many elders, thus in the general only held forth, leaveth room for, yea, is the occasion of, a variety of suppositions of several frames and forms of government which those congregations might be cast into, both in relation to their officers and to the members mutually among themselves. 1. As that either they were *conventus promiscui* (as Didoclavius calls them), promiscuous unfixed assemblies, some meeting together at one place or time, some at another time with others, having no fixed relations. Or else that they were fixed meetings, in respect of the members divided into set determinate companies meeting constantly together. 2. Or else, otherwise, supposing them set and fixed congregations in respect of the members, yet there are other as various and more difficult suppositions that may still be made concerning the relation of these officers and elders, how they were disposed of to the right performance of their duties, which the command of the word lays on them toward their flock; as whether they were either fixed and appropriated to these several congregations respectively, some to one, some to another (as it is in most of the reformed churches, and is with us, and we suppose will not be altered amongst us), or else unfixed in respect of all the congregations, so as equally and mutually in their course these ministers might preach and officiate to them all by turns (as in some cities in Holland). And then, 3, if you suppose them fixedly divided into several congregations, then another question cometh, what power those elders that are appropriated to each congregation should have over the flock? Whether over all, or none, or some part? Now it is the supposition of there being many congregations under one presbytery, that only is the ground of this uncertainty, and bringeth in this variety of suppositions of these several ways how these things should be cast, whereas the supposing of them to be but several distinct churches, though great ones, will make all things fall in naturally. For then there could be but one way of casting and moulding members, nor could there be but one common relation of elders; and so all those duties and things that are spoken about the power and duties of elders, and of the members amongst themselves, and whatsoever is spoken of churches and elders, their dues and duties, run all but in one channel. And then consider too (supposing them many congregations) that the designing out which of those suppositions was the pattern left by the apostles, was a matter of as much moment (as touching the point of the right ordering of congregations) as this common presbyterial government can be supposed to be of, inasmuch as it concerns the execution of all mutual duties between people and pastors, and the administration of all holy things amongst them, appertaining to this particular government of the several congregations; and upon the right ordering and settlement of

them, and of these elders' relations to them, doth the right government and administration of all holy things depend. And yet consider too, at the same time, that we do not find the Holy Ghost making so much as a mention of any such distinct subordinated congregations to a *classis* (only the multitudes of believers are looked upon through multiplying glasses to argue it), much less giving any hints to discern by, in the history of the apostles, or in the epistles, what the frame was of these supposed churches, and what their particular special relation to elders in this supposed variety was. There is not anything to any such purpose extant, in either that instance of Jerusalem, or any other of those examples of cities, that are pretended to hold forth this multitude of congregations making one church under one common presbyterial government. This hath long and doth still stick in our consciences, because the Holy Ghost is silent, and hath not left us the least footsteps in the sacred history, to discern in which of these ways (supposing many congregations thus making a church for government) the apostles did settle the constitution of this church, and how they did dispose the relation of these elders and officers to those several congregations.

CHAPTER VIII.

The instances of the churches settled by the apostles in the lesser cities and villages, prove a congregational church to be according to the apostolical and primitive form.

Let us now go over all the examples of the churches in the New Testament (which must interpret Christ's speech in Mat. xviii.), and let us see whether they were classical or congregational. For the instance of the church of Jerusalem and the like, we will speak to them under the consideration of the churches in greater cities. But let us now go over all the other.

The first churches we read of in the beginning of the gospel are in Acts ix. 31, 'Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified,' &c. These are called churches in that common notion whereby churches constituted by the apostles were distinguished one from the other. And is this their diversification and title of churches like to have been in a classical respect or congregational, as here he speaks of them generally? Let the words and circumstances of the story be considered.

1. It was in the beginning of the gospel that these churches had been raised; and the special means we read of whereby they were erected, was Peter and John's ministry, of whom we read, chap. viii. 25, that 'returning to Jerusalem, they preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans,' as also some of the dispersed from Jerusalem had done. Ver. 4, 'They went everywhere, διήλθον, they went through all or about,' namely Judea and Samaria, as Philip in Samaria, ver. 5. And as their preaching had been everywhere, and in villages, which is chiefly noted, ver. 25, so accordingly the churches that were constituted out of those converted, are said to have been in all Judea and Samaria, &c., and therefore in villages. For that the Holy Ghost should aforehand in the Acts so remarkably relate their preaching in many villages of Samaria, and then make mention of churches throughout Samaria, argues his intent to have been to shew that these churches were those in these villages; and these not as gathered into cities, but remaining throughout Samaria, as the gospel had been preached in the villages. Nor needed they now (for they had rest) forbear to hold up their church-fellowship

in the several places of their abode. And therefore when upon this rest Peter took the opportunity to visit them (as in the next verse of that 9th chapter it is said Peter passed through all, namely, as it is translated, all quarters where these churches were scattered, some here, some there, up and down), all of them, whether in cities or in villages, are in one uniform respect called churches, for his speech wherein he involves them all promiscuously is similar, and so meant of the same kind of churches. Now is it imaginable that throughout these regions or countries the churches whereof he speaks should be all such classical churches as are now amongst us, when at the beginning of the gospel but a few saints and professors of Christianity can be supposed to be scattered everywhere up and down? It was well if, by reason of their being so thin sown up and down in those regions, they could make up congregational churches with elders to them.

2. When it is said that these churches had rest and were edified, is it likely he should speak this of these churches as classical, as such which meet but in their elders for exercise of discipline; or rather of these churches as enjoying rest in the ordinances of worship on the Lord's day, public prayers, the word, sacraments, and all other means of edification and comfort, for the preservation of the purity of which, discipline doth but subserve? They are the congregational churches, and the communion the saints have therein, that are the great means of comfort, edification, and multiplication of churches; and the enjoyment of these, in rest, is that which is the greatest outward mercy and privilege. And therefore when he sets out the condition of those times, 'Then had the churches rest, and were edified,' he means congregational churches. And when he says the churches were multiplied, which if understood of more and new churches erected, doth he reckon their multiplication by presbyterian churches, that do consist of many congregations each of them? Is it likely a multitude of many more such churches were erected? No, rather they were so many fixed congregations of believers.

2. Let us come to the next mention of churches in that story, Acts xiv. 23 (slipping over that church of Antioch, chap. xiii., the demonstration of which to have been a congregational church, we refer to another place, when we examine the state of churches in cities), 'And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.' That these were congregational churches, will appear in like manner by the like circumstances of the story. In Acts xiii. 14, we read that Paul and his company came to Antioch in Pisidia, where the Jews refusing the gospel, 'Lo, we turn to the Gentiles,' said Paul and Barnabas, ver. 46, 'For so the Lord hath commanded us; I have sent thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth, and many believed;' and accordingly, ver. 48 and ver. 49, 'The word of the Lord was published throughout the regions.' Then chap. xiv., Paul and Barnabas fled to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia, and 'unto the region that lieth round about, and there they preached the gospel.' Here again, as afore in Pisidia, so now in Lycaonia, not in cities only, but in the regions they preached. And this is noted to shew the spreading of the gospel (for to what end else should the preaching of it be recorded?). And ver. 21 it is said, that when at Derbe they had taught *ἱκανούς* a sufficient competent number in that city, they went again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, the chief cities of those countries Lycaonia and Pisidia, in the regions of which they had preached the gospel, as well as in those cities. And the story relates that the end and purpose of this second visit of these places was to confirm the disciples,

ver. 22, and to gather them into churches, and ordain elders over them, ver. 23, whom they had afore preached unto and made disciples. Thus they made fit matter for churches by making disciples, ver. 24, and then moulded and formed them up into a way of order for worship and government by elders established in the several congregations. For these churches they thus formed and ordained elders unto were surely congregational. For,

1. If we suppose them to have been only the disciples in these cities of Lystra and Derbe, Iconium and Antioch, yet it is not supposable that in each the number of disciples should arise to more than one congregation in a city, now in this beginning of the gospel, and in so short a time; and yet they were formed up into churches, and had elders in every church. Or,

2. Can we suppose that the apostles stayed gathering them into those churches with elders till their number would arise to many congregations in each city sufficient to make classical churches, and that they did not till then constitute them churches, nor placed elders over them? Can it be imagined they would keep men out of ordinances so long, or that themselves, being apostles, and to sow the gospel in the world, would still stay so long till everywhere such members did arise? Yea,

3. The 21st verse intimates (in the instance of Derbe) their manner to have been (and as there so in other places), that when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many (or as the word is, *ἱκανούς*, made a sufficient and competent number of disciples, and sufficient for what? ver. 23, to make up a church, and whereof some might be fit persons for elders therein), then they used to leave that city and went to other places, as there it is said they did, and so long to stay there till there were a sufficiency for a church and elders; or if before they could accomplish this, they were driven out, then they either returned to form them into churches with elders (which was their end of coming this second time to Lystra and those cities, to confirm the disciples, and ordain them elders, as now to become a church), or else afterwards sent evangelists to them.

And 4. As those disciples were in the regions about as well as in the cities (for afore it was noted in the story, that in the regions about, both of Pisidia and Lycaonia, the gospel was preached), so it must be supposed that these churches were set up in the countries about, as well as in the cities. And it is hard to think that all the Christians should leave their callings and dwellings they were bred and born in, to come up to the cities to make classical churches, or that they were so many converted in the villages as to make classical churches there. Paul saith, 1 Cor. vii. 10, that he ordained in all churches, that men should abide in the callings wherein God called or converted them in; and to suppose that husbandmen in the countries should leave their callings of husbandry, &c., and come up to the cities, where they could not exercise that calling, to leave their livelihood, and wives converted to leave their husbands, children their parents, servants their masters, and come to dwell in the cities only, and not rather have churches made up in the countries also, is hard to think. But,

5. And lastly. These could not be classical churches here, but congregational, for it is the first ordaining of these elders to these churches that is here mentioned, and not an associating of many congregations into one eldership; and therefore here is a gathering congregational churches, and ordaining elders thereunto apart, *κατ' ἐκκλησίαν*. And there must be a sufficient company of Christians ere a congregational church is made up, as a number of congregations with elders must be supposed ere a classical church can be framed. This being therefore the first framing them into churches, and ordaining them elders (or else you must suppose churches long

afore they had elders), it must be in a congregational way. And further also, there is this reason, that these congregations being then fixed for officers and elders, if these elders were ordained to these churches, their ordination as elders must be to their several churches respectively, and not to the common eldership made up of them. And such were called churches, endowed with elders proper unto them, and so much the word (and that is added in that Acts xiv. 23) doth import, 'they ordained or chose αὐτοῖς to them elders in every church,' that is, to every church they chose their own proper and peculiar elders, fixed and appointed unto them.

That this was the primitive way of planting the gospel may further be confirmed by that parallel place to this, Titus i. 5, where there being many believers already converted (as many passages in that epistle do argue) and yet not in most places formed up into churches with elders, the apostle left Titus an evangelist (whose proper office it was, as appears by the epistle, and that to Timothy, to settle believers and churches in their right frame and order, according to the apostle's directions given), to ordain elders in every city or town (as shall be shewn by and by) where any number of believers were to make a church, and where fit and meet men for elders might be found to set over those churches. And that which Luke, in the fore-cited Acts xiv. 23, calleth 'ordaining elders in every church,' Paul here calleth 'ordaining elders in every city,' and the one interprets the other. And the apostle's practice there is here turned into a command or direction, as given to Titus, which therefore, as it bound him, binds us to the ends of the world; and he adds, 'as I appointed thee.' Now his meaning is, not that elders should be ordained in every city simply as it was a city or body of men, for elders and church were relatives, as shepherd and flock, and therefore elders were not ordained but to a church; and therefore to say he ordained elders in the city, necessarily supposeth a church extant in that city unto which these elders were ordained, and therefore the ordination was only in such cities or towns where a church was, and a competent sufficient number of believers to make a church. For that must needs be the reason why Paul himself did not cast and mould these people in Crete converted by him presently into churches with elders as fast as they were converted, because a church should have a convenient competent number, and fit men to be elders unto them, before they be formed into such a body. And therefore he being called away too soon, he left Titus behind him to finish that work.

The writers for episcopacy have made use of this place to shew that in the apostle's times they planted churches only in cities (and it is certain that they bestowed their pains chiefly therein), so that they make the apostolical institution to be, that look how many believers soever were in a city and the villages about it, so many were to make one church diocesan for government; and therefore to ordain elders, κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, in every church, Acts xiv. 23, is all one, and to ordain elders κατα πόλιν, in every city, as here, Titus i. 5, and this by the apostle's own ordination, 'as I appointed thee,' *i.e.* over these cities, and so the churches therein and the vicinity thereof, he as one man was as a bishop set. And some of those for the classical government do make use of the same notion, that all churches in a city, when multiplied, were by apostolical institution to be but one church for government, as well as at first when they were but one congregation; and the elders at first planted in that first church were still to continue, together with all the elders that should anew be set over those churches, as one eldership, a presbytery unto them in that city as one church. The appearances for this opinion we shall speak to when arguments for the presbyterial government come to be discussed. In the mean time, as to this place, if we inter-

pret it by that former, and consider all circumstances, it makes for congregational churches and elderships over them. For,

1. This direction was given to Titus, now in the first beginning of the gospel in Crete; for Paul having newly been there with him, and having converted many up and down in the island, he left Titus behind, to ordain them elders. So as here was the first erection of churches and elders; and therefore it was in the beginning of the gospel, at which time all the saints, in each great city converted, were but as many as might make but one church. And it was the duty of saints, that all the saints in a place cohabiting should join in one, rather than in divers companies, for worship, and all ordinances, and not divide, both because of unity and more presence of the Spirit, and the solemnity of the worship, and for all these ever to continue one church, till absolute necessity would cause a division into many; hence in this beginning of the gospel, he writes to him to ordain elders in every city, because his ordination was, that saints cohabiting should make one church, and not divide for all ordinances, and that they should have elders, more than one, set over them, both for worship and government, because, *de facto*, there were but so many in the greatest cities as would make but one church. And,

2. This being interpreted by the former, κατα πόλιν by κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, city here therefore is not meant literally the extent of a city, but metonymically it is put for the church then extant in any city, and so doth not necessarily import that the extent of the church government should be by God's ordination equal to the extent of the city; as if because there were in a city so many as would make more churches, he was not to ordain them elders, κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, in every church in those cities, as the apostle had done, for they were not to be elders to that city, as a city, but to the churches in that city; and as congregational churches are meant in Acts xiv., so also they are here intended. But,

III. And chiefly, as church by church, in Acts xiv., was not in cities only, but in villages, or market country towns, so here also κατα πόλιν is to be understood, for the word πόλις, when indefinitely used (as here), is taken not for great cities only, but country towns. And accordingly, in the New Testament, when the planting and propagating the gospel is mentioned, the business here spoken of and concerned, we find that when the commission to preach the gospel is given to the apostles and disciples, that the word πόλις is taken for villages as well as great cities, as being those they were sent to preach unto, as indifferently and promiscuously as to cities; and, therefore, when like directions are given to frame churches, and set up elderships over them (as here), it is answerably to be taken. Thus in the commission given, Mat. x. 11, whereas Christ says, 'Into what city or town ye enter,' the evangelist Luke says, chap. x. 8 (uttering the same commission), 'Into what city ye enter.' That word therefore is put for all and both, and therefore he useth a general indefinite word, εἰς ἣν δ' ἂν πόλιν, 'Into whatever city ye enter;' that is, city of any sort or kind, small or great, as intending towns, as well as cities strictly so called. And further, he, in his speech, useth it as the contradistinct term to house or family, of which he had said before, 'into what house ye enter,' so now into what city, and therefore intended to take in all sorts of towns, consisting of more families than one. And the practice of the twelve apostles, who had received commission, in Mat. ix. interprets it; ver. 6, it is said they went through towns, preaching the gospel, where the word *towns* is only used, as including cities, as in Luke the word *cities* only is used, as including towns; and so the one promiscuously

is put for the other; for in the preceding verse, ver. 5, Christ, in his commission given, calls them cities; 'When ye go out of a city' (says he) 'where you have preached, shake off the dust;' and then, in the execution of this commission, they are called towns, 'they went through the towns preaching,' ver. 6. And further, in Mat. x. 23, when Christ teaching them if they were persecuted where they preached, to fly; if they persecute you in one city, fly into another; that is, if persecuted in one town, fly into another; what, were they persecuted only in great cities? Yes, in towns, for they were whipped in synagogues, and synagogues were in villages, Mat. x. 33. And is the direction given to them to fly into smaller towns, if they might be safe there, as well as into cities, or there only were they to have the promise of protection? So Acts xiv. 6. Paul and Barnabas fled to Derbe and Lystra, and the regions about, as well as to the cities, and there had safety, and preached the gospel. And Christ further adds in that place, 'you shall not have gone over all the cities of Israel,' &c., that is, the towns, for in towns they preached. And so Christ himself preached in all cities and towns, and so did the apostles, and it was their commission so to do.

And it seems there was something special in the state and condition of Crete, why the word πόλις should be there used. Crete is but a small island, and there are at this day but three cities in it. In the apostle's times, there were four hundred cities (for so Pliny, who lived not long after them, relates) said to have been in it, which were but small towns. And therefore Beza hath translated it *oppidatim*, town by town, as also so understanding it.

Now, therefore, if the word πόλις be indefinitely taken for country towns, as well as great cities, when commission was given to preach the gospel, why should it not be taken also in that sense, when direction is given to make up churches, and ordain elders to them, in the same places where it hath been preached? And therefore to ordain elders, κατὰ πόλιν is not to be confined to cities only (where many congregations, as is supposed, have been), but in country towns, or very small cities (when in Crete there were so many), where churches may be supposed to have been, and those to be sure but congregational, and in both such cities and towns only where churches and saints, ἱκανοι, sufficient to make churches, were found. So then κατὰ πόλιν, city by city, Titus i. 5, and κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, church by church, Acts xiv. 23, are all one. And if in greater churches there were more than one elder, then their elders were ordained κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, church by church.

And surely it is a hard supposition to suppose that in Crete the apostle Paul, and Titus the evangelist, had preached only in the cities, when the commission was to teach all nations, and therein towns as well as cities, as they had occasion. Was God's elect in cities only? and were not country souls as precious? And if they be converted unto God, were not they to be taught to do what Christ commanded, as well as those in cities? and to become churches, and to have the privilege of all ordinances? Or were they to come up to the cities for them, and to the elders there, as the tribes did for judgment to Jerusalem? These are harder suppositions than what the presbyterians put upon us, as an absurdity, that the fruit of the apostles' preaching should in great cities arise to the conversion but of so many, as to make but one congregation.

And besides, if city should here, Titus i. 5, be taken strictly for greater cities, then here is no commission to Titus to ordain elders to churches elsewhere. And so then the institution of the bounds of a church, and the extent of the jurisdiction of elders, should be cast rather to the mould and

extent of great cities; that if one city, then one church, one eldership, though there were never so many congregations in it; and thus elders in every city is to be understood of greater cities, then not of the churches in towns and villages, where there could rationally be but one church in a town. But why the pattern of church government should fall upon, and be framed rather to the example of a city, and so conformed to the mould of the civil government in cities especially, and not as well upon the way of country towns, when Κατὰ πόλιν will import the one as well as the other (and the pattern surely was uniform in both), we see no ground of reason for difference. Why should we imagine that the apostle should still so have in his eye in these directions to Titus, classical presbyteries (which are but the external government of the church), as to take care of the ordaining elders, as in relation hereunto, and not much rather for the ordaining elders in order to the worship of God in churches, and for the establishment of their relation of elders to congregations or churches.

Let us go on from these fore-mentioned, to all other that are either called churches, or where the saints, written to by the apostles, may by circumstances be supposed to have been gathered into churches, under elders and officers.

In the epistles of James and Peter, written to the scattered Jews, we find mention of elders, and therefore there must be supposed churches, whereof they were elders; and we find indeed mention of elders of the church; and let the circumstances be considered, whether those may be more rationally supposed congregational or classical. Let us consider their condition.

1. They were Jews scattered, and as some probably conceive, were many of them of those scattered, Acts viii. And as such, both of these apostles did write to them; and as scattered up and down vast regions, whole countries, Asia, Bythinia, Cappadocia, and therefore not thick sown (being strangers), nor in multitudes, living so near, that they can be supposed to have made associated churches.

2. Those scattered persons, therefore, must rationally be supposed to have made up churches of themselves, as those of the Dutch strangers do in London, and the English in Holland; and not to have promiscuously mingled themselves with those natives of the countries they were scattered into; for they had a differing language from the Gentiles, though turned Christians. And this we find in Aquila and Priscilla, who being Jews, and having had a church in their house (namely of Jews), in Rome, as chap. xvi. of that epistle; and afterwards the Jews being banished from Rome, Acts xviii. 2, Aquila and Priscilla removed, but kept their church together still distinct from the native Asiatic Christians. Therefore, in 1 Cor. xvi. we read of the church at their house in Asia, and as some think at Ephesus, and there joined or mentioned with the rest of the churches of Asia, in Paul's salute unto the Corinthians, and is mentioned apart from them, because it was a church of Jews, strangers scattered among them, and kept distinct from them. And yet it was such a kind of church (though less) that all those churches in Asia, made mention of together with it, were of (both that particular church, and all the rest, being alike spoken of promiscuously under the name of church and churches, as being all like churches); and it will easily be granted, that that church in Aquila and Priscilla's house was congregational, for it is an instance alleged by the Assembly at Westminster, of many congregational churches in Ephesus, whereof that was one particular. Now look as Aquila and Priscilla, and their fellow strangers, kept a distinct church of their countrymen (which is the reason that church is in two epistles so apart singly mentioned), so in like manner did these scattered

strangers cast themselves into churches of themselves, and their own nation, distinct from the other Gentile believers in the places where they came. And it was usual then for the Jews to have synagogues for them of their nation in several cities. And, therefore, both James and Peter writeth unto them apart as strangers; and they involve not the mention of any Gentile Christians with them, because they themselves were apart from them. And yet they writ to these thus scattered and kept distinct, as to churches that had elders, 'The elders that are among you' (says Peter), 1 Pet. v. ver. 1, 2, ἐν ὑμῖν. The phrase is of distinction, that as they writ to these Jews apart from the Christian Gentiles, so the elders that are ἐν ὑμῖν, elders of you Jews, peculiar to you, that is, that belong to any of you. And therefore James, chap. v. 14, also exhorts them that were sick among them, or of them, to send for the elders of the church, not as if these had but one church, for that was impossible, being scattered over so many countries; therefore he speaks indefinitely, as giving a direction that they should send for the elders of those churches where they were, so as they had churches and elders. And these elders must be considered (in that speech) as elders of congregational churches (as was afore observed), for how can it be imagined that men scattered so far off from one another, should be commanded to send (when sick) for the elders of a church classical, and such a church and elders, as common to such churches, to be intended? The sick persons could not send but for elders that were ready at hand; and therefore a congregational church is meant and intended, and the elders of it. And, therefore, farther in the second chapter, the same apostle James, speaking in the like indefinite manner, 'if a man come into your synagogue,' εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν (says he, ver. 2), that is, into any of your synagogues where you worship, a phrase proper to express their church meetings unto the Jews (seeing, as was said, they had synagogues in several places). And what in the 5th chapter he calls the elders of the church, here in the second he calls a synagogue, calling their assembly (as it is well translated) such. And these elders of the church (which was a phrase suited to the Greek idiom) is in analogical phrase of speech, or by way of similitude, all one as to say, rulers of the synagogues among the Jews, their churches being congregational, of as many as could meet to worship, like as the Jews' synagogues were; and their elders as their rulers, and the government of these Christian synagogues of Christian Jews, like to the government of those Jewish synagogues, that were scattered up and down out of Judea in Gentile cities (whereof we so often read), which was an entire government within themselves, for they were therefore called rulers of their proper synagogues. And according unto the analogy of those assemblies of churches of theirs, with their elders over them synagogue-wise, is that in Peter (who writes to the same persons) to be understood: 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 'Let the elders among you feed' (by preaching and ruling) 'the flock' (indefinitely taken as synagogue in James, and for the several flocks respectively); and in that he writes to them to feed by preaching as by ruling, and the same to do the one that did the other, it falls in with the former notion, that he means congregational elders, who as they are fixed for feeding by preaching to one flock, so they must be for ruling also, or else these are divided in their extent, when yet the precept both is alike given, and made of like extent. But of this hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

That the account which the Scripture gives us of a single church established by the apostles in one city, demonstrates congregational churches to have been by the primitive institution of Christ.

We now will go over all other instances of congregational churches, as they appear settled by the apostles in cities.

1. The church of Colossians was but one, which is argued by this, 1. That the apostle, writing to that church, writes to them as a whole church; and also that their ministers that were over this whole church were fixed ministers unto them; and, if so, then that whole church could be but one congregation, for he that is a fixed minister hath a relation, for his teaching, but to one congregation. Now their chief minister Epaphras was a fixed minister to that church: Col. i. 7, 'who is for you a faithful minister of Christ:' chap. iv. 12, 'Epaphras, who is one of you.' If there had been many congregations, to one of which he had been fixed, he had been more that congregation's minister than all the rest; and his special relation had been to them, and therefore his salutation would have been mentioned, as especially to his own church, more than to all the rest of the congregations, as his labour and pains (when constant among them), was more to that particular congregation than any other. Since, therefore, his salutation is to all the Colossian Christians, it is evident that they were but one congregational church, whose pastor he was. And again, the apostle writes to the whole church, as those that had learned the gospel of Epaphras, who was for them a faithful minister. Now if Epaphras had been a fixed elder to one congregation, and there had been many more there beside, that one congregation had been the congregation who had comparatively learned the gospel of him, more than all the congregations besides; and Paul would not have written thus indefinitely, and alike of all, if there had been many. For he had been a faithful minister only to that congregation he was fixed to, and properly theirs as concerning communion, by way of learning and teaching, wherefore the apostle would have singled out that congregation in his speech from all the rest, if there had been more than one. And then, as to their other ministers, Archippus, Col. iv. 17, the apostle enjoins them to say to him, 'Take heed to the ministry that thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.' Had he been a fixed minister to one congregation, and there had been many congregations there besides, the main of his ministry lying in his preaching and personal watching over that one congregation he was fixed to (for that which a minister doth in ruling in common over all the congregations, according to the classical suppositions, is the least part of his ministry), the apostle would have singled out that congregation, with whom he walked continually, as those that should have said to him, Fulfil thy ministry; because that they who were his constant hearers must needs be best, if not only acquainted with what the fulfilling of the main and constant part of his ministry was, and with what were any neglects or defects therein. Seeing, therefore, he writes to them thus indefinitely, in relation to their own ministers, without any distinction, it argues that they were but one church, having these elders fixed to them for preaching and government. And of this church he saith, that for their faith and order, for their doctrine and worship and government, they were complete, and his heart was comforted, as well in the one as in the other, Col. ii. 2, 5; and he encourageth them to walk in both, according as they had received of Jesus Christ the Lord; and, if so, then to keep that order too (which already they had), without any alteration, to

which he would never have exhorted them, if it had been their duty (when multiplied to more churches) to enter into another different order and form of government, κατ' ἐκκλησίαν.

2. There is the church of Philippi. The apostle speaks of them in the beginning of the gospel as a church, saying, Philip. iv. 15, that 'in the beginning of the gospel, no church communicated to him by way of giving and receiving, but only them;' and in the beginning of the gospel, even in the greatest cities, a church was no more than could meet together in one. Now, look what manner of church they were at the first, he speaks of them as such still, and useth the same style: 'No other church but you,' saith he.

3. The church of Antioch is another that is to be considered. It was an entire church, having government within itself. For if it could have discerned that controversy in Acts xv., and so had been capable of deciding it, it had power to have done it, and need never have sent to Jerusalem. They did not, therefore, as wanting power, appeal thither as to a court of judicature, but only sent for advice and counsel in a difficult case, wherein their opinions disagreed. 'And the church at Antioch ordained that Paul and Barnabas should go to the apostles at Jerusalem, to consult them about this question'; and it was as one church that they did thus determine; also of Barnabas and others, that 'for a whole year they assembled themselves with the church,' or in the church, ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, 'and taught much people.' And the word ἐκκλησία relateth to assembling together; so the kind of the church must be answerable to the kind of the assembling; and if the assembling was for worship, then the church in which they met was a congregational church, which is the seat for worship; and we believe that none will say that many churches are ever called one church in respect of assembling for worship. But here that they assembled for worship is plain, for they assembled themselves in the church and taught much people. Now the church in which there is teaching is a congregational church. And besides that, he saith it was *in the church* (as the Greek hath it), not only *with the church*. If there had been several congregations in this city where the word had been taught, speaking of assembling for teaching, if ever, or at any time he would have mentioned those many congregations, surely he would have done it upon this occasion, especially relating to matter of fact, he would have spoken distributively. For why should he call congregations churches upon other occasions (as often he doth), or in any other relation, and not upon this; whereas the relation here is purely congregational, for it is for teaching the word and worship? Again, 2, we read twice of the meetings of that church together, Acts xiv. 27. When Paul and Barnabas came back to give an account to those of Antioch, from whom they had been commended to the grace of God, it is said, 'When they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done by them.' Did they make the relation to the classical elders only? Did not the rehearsal concern all the people, as well every soul amongst them as any sermon, it being to shew how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles that they might glorify God? And in Acts xv. 30, it is said when they came to Antioch to deliver the epistle from the church at Jerusalem, they gathered the multitude together, and at that time made a sermon, an exhortation to them; and he calleth this multitude brethren: ver. 32, 'They exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.' Thus, as the meetings in the church of Jerusalem are six or seven times mentioned to be in one, so the church of Antioch is here twice so mentioned.

4. We have an account of the church of Troas. A church they were, for they had elders; and elders they had, for they had the sacrament; and

it was at a meeting but in one place, Acts xx. 70, and Paul stayed there seven days, till they met. They all met to break bread, and all in one; for it was in an upper room where Paul preached to them, and if there had been more congregations than one, he would have preached to one at one time, and to another at another time.

5. By the churches of Galatia (as they are styled 1 Cor. xvi. 1), doth he mean congregational churches or classical? Congregational only; for, first, when he speaks of them, it is concerning collection for the saints: 'Even as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye.' Now the order for collection for the saints concerns congregational churches, not classical: 'Let every one of you, upon the first day of the week, lay up in store as God hath prospered him' (*i. e.* lay up in the common treasury of the congregation), 'that there be no gathering when I come.' And then, 2, if they had a provincial church, he would certainly have called them so in his epistle to the Galatians; but when (as we see there) those churches were corrupted with corrupt doctrine, and he exhorts them to purge out the old leaven, Gal. v. 9, he then writes to them as to churches that were apart, to purge out the old leaven, as the church of Corinth did, and each to become a new lump. If they be considered as one lump, yet it was as being leavened by way of infection, but that in 1 Cor. v. is by way of guilt.

6. The church of Laodicea, mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians, was also but a congregational church, Col. iv. 16. 'When this epistle is read amongst you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.' That church wherein reading the word is, is a congregational church, for reading is a work of worship. And if in other places he had ever called a church in relation to government consisting of many churches, yet here, if there had been many churches, and many churches for worship, he would have said so, and have thus expressed himself, 'Let it be read in the churches of Laodicea.' He would have spoke of the duty, and of the subject of the duty, in a suitable way. When he speaks of the reading of the word among the Jews, he saith it is read in every synagogue every Sabbath day; he speaks distributively, and so he would have done here.

7. I shall now proceed to prove that the churches of Asia were congregational churches.

1. That the church of Laodicea was a congregational church we refer to what hath been said.

2. Five of these Asiatic churches even Downam acknowledgeth not to have been in great cities; and such are to be supposed probably to have but one congregation, those smaller cities containing but Christians as made one church in each of them.

3. The constitution of all those churches for worship and government was one and the same; and therefore, if Laodicea and some of the rest were but congregational churches, then all the rest were so too. For they are intended all as types of all churches to the end of the world. Now, if some of them had been congregational churches, and others had been classical, they could not have suited the state and condition of all churches, both congregational and classical, which have a government and a constitution different. And the apostle, Rev. ii. and iii., writes to the angels of those churches, as having an entire government among themselves; and he writes to them about matters of discipline, and therefore regards them as uniform for the matter and seat of government. And if that be true, which some historians have reported,* that Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in Nero's reign, long afore the time of John's writing the Revelation, then it must

* Tacit. Annal. lib. xiv.

needs have been intended only as a type. And that all these churches were uniform, appears by this also, that in the closure of this epistle, what he writes to one church he writes to all, 'Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,' which is all one with the conclusion of the whole book in Rev. xxii. 16, 'he sent his angel to testify these things in the churches.' And if congregational churches be acknowledged churches in the Scripture phrase, they must be intended in that speech; and that those should be mainly intended appears by this, because that the book of the Revelation was only to be read in such churches. And likewise that they were congregational churches appears by this, that he writes to them as to the seven candlesticks which Christ walked in the midst of, and he threateneth them that he would remove the candlestick. Now, by candlestick he interprets the churches, chap. i. 1.; and they are candlesticks especially in relation to worship. It was an ordinance of worship in the temple; and it is therefore in Zech. iv. 2 put for the completing of all the temple for worship, and all the utensils of it, for though their Sanhedrim for government might be complete before, yet the temple was not then built, in which God was to be worshipped; and indeed the promise of the presence of Christ is most in respect of worship, which the saints are most constant in; and when he threateneth to remove the candlestick, certainly the chief threatening falls upon their church state, and the enjoyment of the ordinances of worship, such as preaching, the sacraments, &c. And whereas some would argue many congregations to have been in every one of these churches; bishops have done so, because in the end of each epistle he concludeth, 'Let them hear what the Spirit saith to the churches,' as having many churches in each church of them; we answer,

1. That it is a speech all one with that in Rev. xxii. 16, 'I have sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches;' for as that is the closure of all, and is meant of all churches, so this is the closure of each epistle, and is meant by way of example of all churches in the world, he singling out seven for all the rest.

And 2. It is but such an indefinite speech as that in Rev. xiii. 29, 'If any have an ear, let him hear;' so here the meaning is, let every church hear.

And 3. If that notion be true of Mr Brightman's, that they are types of all churches to come to several nations (as it is most probable they are), then it hath a clear other meaning than that of there being many particular churches in each of those cities.

To conclude, we find that in all those epistles of Paul when he writeth to the several churches of Philippi, Colossus, Thessalonica, &c., he writeth to them most and chiefly concerning the duties which lay upon them in respect of their particular relation to that particular congregation whereof they are members, and with whom they have a fixed communion, and do ordinarily converse with both officers and people. Now, if there had been more congregational churches than one in each of these cities (as is supposed), there is far more reason why he would rather have written to them under the style of several churches in such a place (as he doth when he writes to the Galatians), when he urgeth such duties upon them, rather than to have given them the title of one church, in respect of an association for government only. If he had written of matters of government only or chiefly to them, then the expression of calling them one church had been suitable to the duties he exhorts them to; but the duties principally concerning them, as they were members of distinct congregations, having a nearer communion both towards their officers fixed to them, and the people fixed in a near communion with them, he would rather have used the style of churches than of one church, if there had been many churches in those cities. And farther, since, according

to this supposition, the primary relation of pastors to churches being in the several distinct congregations, but the relation of these members one to another, as they are a classical church, being but a secondary relation, it were strange that when the Holy Ghost writes and speaks to such and such churches in such and such a city (supposing many), he should write to them only under the notion of a classical church, and mention that only, and not mention their other church state as being several churches, making one church, nay, not so much as speak, that they were several congregations. Since they are churches congregational in the language of the Holy Ghost, and that the main of what is a church (as hath been shewed) falls upon them as such, how can we think that this association into one church, which is a secondary thing, should wholly carry away and swallow up the name, style, and title of the other? And that which further strengthens this consideration is, that when they write to churches, in a nation or in a province (as in Galatia, and in Asia, and in Judea, and the like), if that a politic association (such or the like association to this whereby it is affirmed that in one city many particular congregations are made one classical church for government), if such a one were intended, then they would as well, and by the same reason (in writing to such churches in a nation or province), have written to them under the notion of one church as well as when they did write thus to them in a city. But the apostle when he writeth to a whole province, then he saith *churches* (although according to presbyterian principles they are as truly one church in the same political respect that a classical church is one in respect of many congregations of a city); but, on the contrary, when he writeth to a city, he doth give them the name of *church*, without the least mention of churches therein as making that one church. And the reason is strong, that he should have done the one as well as the other; for if many churches were called one church in a city, because that is the greater association whereby the lesser churches were governed, by the same reason he would much rather have called the churches of Judea one church, because the association in a province or nation is larger and greater than that of many congregations in a classical church in a city.

And whereas some argue from the multitude of believers in a city, as too great to make but one congregational church; if the case had been so, it had been then more conducible for the apostle to have expressed the multitude in such cities by the name of churches in a city than by calling them one church. And it is strange that when the story is told of the apostles coming to such or such a city (as in the Acts it is), it is still said they called the church together, as when the people were called together in Antioch, Acts xiv. 27. For if they had been many congregations, and had met in parts by way of distribution, it had been a much more proper phrase to say, they called the churches, if there had been more in such a city.

Object. The apostle still, in writing unto the saints in great cities, calleth them one church; and it were strange if that, in the apostle's times, they should not have multiplied in such great cities to more than one congregation.

Ans. 1. As you say it is hard to think that there were no cities that had but* one congregation, so it is as hard to think that all the churches in other places, villages and cities, should not be uniform.

2. There might be some cities where there might be more churches than one, to whom they wrote, as the city of Rome to whom Paul wrote, might have more churches than one; for he doth not in his epistle call the saints there one church; and though he speaks of a church in Aquila and Priscilla's house, yet his phrase of writing otherwise is only to the saints at Rome.

* Qu 'more than'?—ED.

3. All those that write against episcopacy, both of the Scottish nation and of our own, have with one mouth affirmed, that it cannot by manifest argument be made out that the churches mentioned in the New Testament were more than could meet in one congregation.

4. The meaning is, that when the story of the Acts and those Epistles were written, that then there were no more, but not that afterwards there were no more.

5. Although the apostles did specially preach to cities, yet let it be considered how little time they were forced to stay in cities, because they were to lay the foundation of the gospel in all the world. And though Paul stayed three years in or about Ephesus, yet it doth not appear that he stayed so long time in Ephesus itself; but, as in the 13th and 14th chapter of the Acts it is said they went into the countries, so likewise he did.

6. The apostles did teach the saints in every city to become one church, and to hold together so long as possibly they could continue in one congregation with edification. And how great and large a synagogue in a city was, we may see by that instance of Capernaum. And the Christians met in the cities, and built synagogues for meeting-places, as well as the Jews were allowed to do in the cities of the Gentiles.

CHAPTER X.

The constitution of a congregational church evidenced to be by the wise appointment of Christ, because it is so exactly accommodated to the various conditions of saints.

Let us now see whether of these two should in reason be the institution of Christ, and which, a classical or congregational church, would suit most with the condition of the saints under the New Testament. God hath still moulded his institution, and varied it himself according to what was the future condition of his church. Whilst the church was continued in families, as under the old law, he sorted his government and ordinances accordingly. When they grew up to a nation, he fitted a new government on purpose for them. When in the wilderness, a tabernacle only; when fully settled under a kingly power, a temple. Now, under the gospel, the condition of saints in nations varying in several ages, he hath framed his ordinance of church-state suitably.

If it be said that therefore when churches should multiply to a nation, then the government is to be suited unto that nation as such.

We reply, 1. When we see whole nations truly turn Christian, an answer is to be given.

2. God saw it would fall out otherwise with his saints in the New Testament, that they would still be redeemed out of nations, therefore still suited his government to his own design.

3. If in his providence he foresaw that nations, being turned to him, should have an answerable government, as the Jews had, he would have given rules answerable. As although the church in the wilderness was not grown up to a kingdom, and had not a set place for worship, and was not come to be disposed of in several cities (as when they should inherit the land of Canaan they should), yet God, foreseeing what he would bring them to, did not give laws only that suited their church state in the wilderness for the present, but he told them that when they should come into Canaan he would choose a place to which they should bring their offering, that this should be the law

of their king, and also appointed what their government should be when dispersed into several cities and towns. And so answerably if he had intended a national form of government for his saints under the New Testament, and all things suitable thereunto (when as yet they were not grown up to national churches), he would aforehand have prescribed laws accordingly.

Now, 1, this institution of congregational churches was such as would suit all times, of the beginning of the gospel and of the continuance of the gospel. The first churches were such necessarily, as was said afore, and when multiplied did still continue so, and might govern themselves, without foreign oppression.

2. It suits all places, villages as well as cities; and we must suppose saints to be as well in villages as in cities. And those villages had elders for worship and government, and the rights of a church. And if God were to make one uniform law, why should the institution be conformed to cities, as is pretended, and that made the pattern and the jurisdiction of all the rest, rather than that of villages; for God is the God of the valleys as well as the hills, and there must be the same uniform rule of both? But now, though the institution, to have the saints with their elders make one classical church, might be supposed to suit cities well enough (for it was but having many churches in them), yet the lesser towns it would not suit, thus to form them up, under the government of a presbytery of many congregations, especially in those times when they were scattered.

3. This institution of congregational churches suits also with all conditions of the church of Christ.

1. With the times of persecution as well as the times of peace. I may say of this congregational government as of faith; it is said of faith that it is a standing grace, it is the *materia prima*, the first matter, out of which all riseth and into which all resolveth. A man liveth by it in prosperity, and if he be in desertion, all is resolved into it. And so it is of congregations, it agrees with all estates, with all times. And though you suppose other governments, yet that always existeth, and all begin from thence; therefore these are called *ecclesiæ primæ*, and the other *ecclesiæ ortæ*.

2. It suiteth the condition of the saints, being scattered all the world over. Whole nations are not saints fit for churches, for the saints are but a company redeemed out of nations. As therefore among the Jews, when they were scattered, their government was a synagague government (therefore some think they began that of synagogues when they first went into Babylon, which we will not dispute), therefore as synagogue government suited with the scattered, the dispersed condition of the Jews, so this suits best with the scattered condition of the saints under the gospel.

3. The constitution also of churches was certainly uniform, in cities and in villages, or wheresoever or in what time soever, the government of them was uniform. When Christ bade them teach every nation to do what he commanded them, he intended that the rule should be uniform, whatever government the nations had; and therefore also the apostle's phrase and style is still, 1 Cor. xvii. 17, 'So I ordain in all the churches.' And that which will suit all churches, all states, all times, is certainly rather the pattern than any other. Christ did not make one form for cities and another for villages, one form for times of persecution and another form for times of peace, for what suited times of persecution would suit times of peace also; and, as the laws of men consider what is best for the generality of men, so the institutions of Christ considered what was best for his church of the New Testament, throughout all ages, and all conditions and places whatsoever.

4. It suits best for the condition of churches, in times, whether pure or

corrupt, reformed or to be reformed, when the churches are generally overgrown with corruptions.

5. By reason of this, that the institution of Christ doth thus fall upon congregational churches, to be those churches which should be the complete seat of worship and government, there was a provision made (and in the event it hath fallen out prosperously) that the truth and the substance of his ordinances, and of church state (taking it as it is itself, a ministerial ordinance), and of the ministry, might and hath continued in all ages. For there being a necessity (if there should be any worship at all) to have congregations for to continue, and uphold the public worship of God; and to that end, to have ministers over them to perform the worship, in this fundamental institution of his, all that profess the Christian name throughout the world in all ages have agreed; and by this means, Jesus Christ hath preserved the truth of a church and ministry, and substance of worship, in the midst of all those varieties of government of several sorts of patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops in that hierarchical way, as also of general councils and other assemblies subordinate to them; and so whatsoever false superstructions have been made, or whatever interruptions, yet still this fundamental constitution of his hath remained, and could not have been secured to continue in all ages (fall out what would) in any other way.

But the great thing, upon which all depends, is to find out what essential thing it is that church institution should fall upon. We say, that the end of churches is a fixed and immediate communion of saints in all ordinances, and that the formal and external part of the institution is but suited so as to attain this end; which is, that saints should be knit together to meet in one for ordinances, having their officers that have relation to them, by whom the ordinances are externally dispensed. So as it is not an accidental thing, or mere external thing (as that they should meet in one place) that the institution falleth upon, but it is the most solid, and substantial, and essential thing, that can be supposed to be the ground of so great an institution. We shall gradually make out the meaning of this assertion, by these following considerations, which will make the glory of Christ in this institution, and the consentaneousness of it to spiritual reason, and the highest ends that may be supposed to be aimed at, to appear.

1. Communion of saints is the adequate end of a church as such, be it what kind of church soever; and therefore in the creed, the church catholic and communion of saints are joined together, and do follow one another, for the one is the end of the other; and all particular churches are therefore also called the churches of the saints. And as the church is framed and formed, answerably, such is the communion; and such as the communion is to be, such is the church to be reckoned, the one being suited to the other.

The church catholic (as now it is called, in respect it is in all nations), although it is one body to Christ, yet the saints therein cannot have, as saints, a fixed, standing, set communion, but occasional; either occasional if outward, or secret and invisible if inward, such as the church, in one age, hath with the church of another age that went afore; such as the church now in heaven and in earth may have together, and in that respect, an ordinance or an institution could not so well fall upon it. But meet it was, that besides this kind of communion, there should be on earth a communion of saints, suited to the state of the church whilst on earth, that should be most entire, and the nearest that can be, and most resembling heaven, for the public worship and glorifying of God in a common enjoyment of ordinances.

2. Under the gospel, the communion of saints is nearer and more intimate than was under the law. As the church exceedeth it, so the communion

is to exceed it; and as their ordinances are more spiritual, so their communion. There is a greater distance of the saints of the church catholic in their habitations under the gospel, than of the Jews under the law. The Jews were nearer as people dwelling in one land, and so were capable of a nearer communion all together than the church catholic now is capable of; yet because it was a nation, therefore their communion was ordered in the way of a national polity, as a government by representation and a representative worship, wherein the females were represented in the males, and yet not frequent and often neither, for it was but three times a year. The communion therefore of saints, then, was carried on in a worldly way (as the state of men in kingdoms, and commonwealths, and in civil things is), and therefore it was a worldly external frame, and the communion answerable. And that of the synagogues was but for the reading the word and prayer only, and not for all sorts of ordinances of worship. The catholic universal church cannot attain to so general a communion under the gospel, as the national church of the Jews did, by reason of the difference of language, and distance of places, and dispersions into all nations; and yet they were to attain to a nearer communion, and more intimate, and the entirest that the saints on earth are capable of, and so to have churches framed as to attain to this.

3. The greatest and entirest communion that saints are capable of, must therefore be by parts on earth, to have communion in public worship and ordinances. It is therefore necessary that the saints should be cast into such assemblies, wherein they might partake of one spirit by 'one bread,' whereby they might partake of one and the same bread individually, which is therefore called the communion of the body of Christ, and whereby they are made one bread, as in the 1 Cor. x. 17. And therefore it is that the Scripture doth express that communion by that word *meeting*, or *being together*, in ordinances, Acts ii. 46, ὁμοθύμαδον, 'with one mind or spirit,' importing that which is the spirit and life of public worship, which (above all other actions done by a multitude) is to have the nearest union of spirits, wherein the entire communion of saints lieth, and whereby God is glorified. And for several churches to meet in the same manner, or at the same time, for the same kind of ordinances, herein doth not lie so much communion, as an uniformity between them. But this is the most internal lively communion, to join in the same act, at the same instant, altogether to God, and is the greatest imitation of heaven, where one spirit will run through all, and God will be all in all at once.

4. And to make yet the communion nearer (for it is to be the nearest), it must be of persons fixed and constant in such a communion; for that is still a more entire nearness, that the same persons should still in an ordinary way meet to join in their spirits in the same ordinances, and so inwardly and jointly thus to glorify God as well as externally. The continuance and the fixedness of the same persons, makes still the union the entirer. And therefore, if, for to enjoy the entirest communion of saints on earth, it was necessary to part the saints for public worship, then also it is needful to part them into fixed bodies, which still also is the nearest resemblance to heaven, which is the perfection of communion.

5. To make this communion yet more entire, it is necessary that, as they should fixedly join in ordinances of worship, so in all other; and that the same persons should enjoy the same ordinances, and one kind of ordinances as well as another, that as they are preached to by the same elders, so they should join in the same prayers, have the same breathings of the Spirit from those prayers, partake of the same bread, feed at the same table; as in a

family, the entireness of it lies in this, that they have the same father and mother, the same master and mistress, partake of the same bread every way, and of the same family duties and family comforts; and so now this communion, in a particular church, both as to worship and government, is uniform. Yea, and acts of government being worship (which the souls of men are edified by, as well as they are by sermons) are wholly spiritual. It is not here as in Israel, whose government was more carnal; for it was the judging of civil causes (civil and ecclesiastical government being all one, mixed together, as the church itself was), it was in such controversies and cases, as now men plead in civil bars about estates; only God was pleased to give laws himself for ordering of such things. But the apostle in 1 Cor. v., and in 1 Cor. vi., severeth the judging of matters in the church, as a church, by way of excommunication, &c., from their judging of things about this life. A church as a church meddleth not now with them, for these affairs of it are wholly spiritual.

So that, for a conclusion, if all the wits of the world should have studied a way to contrive what kind of church to erect for the entirest communion of saints, to attain to that end which is the end of a church instituted, they could have pitched upon no other but this; neither could there have been such a way found out of all other as this is. If that the church universal, the communion of it, had been only occasional, the saints meeting only by virtue of being members of the catholic church promiscuously and indefinitely, sometimes in one company, sometimes in another, though by this promiscuous and indefinite way, there had been a more extensive communion of saints indeed (that is, each saint might have come to have joined in public worship with more numbers of saints, at several times, with more variety); yet it had not been so intensive, so near and high a communion, as for the same saints under the same officers fixedly to meet. And besides, they could not have had an excommunication out of this communion, unless first knit into fixed bodies; neither could they have chosen officers, unless such whose office should cease with the act and performance, which indeed is not an office; for that is a separation of a man to a continued performance of a duty. Nor would it have brought that blessing, that a constant dedication of men to an office for perpetuity would do, which could not be done in that occasional fluid way.

If that such congregations and officers, though bounded within such a compass of a city or so, should have remained unfixed, though associated together within such a circuit or compass, yet this would not have made this entireness of communion of saints, as by this way of fixed congregations there is. And also, in this case, the institution of a church would have been pitched upon some one part, or particular kind of communion, and upon something less principal in it, and not upon the adequate and full foundation of it.

For, first, in this unfixed way of people and officers, though bounded in a compass, this number of saints should have heard this minister to-day, and with other saints have heard another to-morrow, none meeting one day together, that do another day, in which also all might run to one officer still where he preached and leave the other, which would not breed an orderly communion, but rather a confusion; but to have the same officers to be fixed, and the same persons to enjoy the dispensation of the same officers, as in a family children and servants are under the same governors, this is a nearer and entirer communion.

Secondly, in this classical way, there would indeed be a constant and a fixed communion in government, of the elders (namely, of such a circuit)

who, when matter of government was to be exercised, should all meet; but they would not permit (in such a way) or let in the elders of the same province, to meddle as often as they would come, no, not though occasionally they were present there, or came thither to that end. But now to have the same elders and people fixed for all acts of government, and yet to have them unfixed in respect of performing of worship (when that is the main end both of the communion, and for which elders are appointed), and not to have the same fixed companies of people that communicate in this company with those elders, as in this unfixed way they have not, this would put too great an inequality between communion in government and communion in worship, and make the inequality on the part of worship rather, because government is fixed of the same persons, people, and elders, and yet worship, wherein is the nearest communion, is left unfixed. And surely, if communion, and entireness of public communion, be the end of a church, the frame and mould of the church should rather be cast and shaped to that which is the entirest communion, than unto that which is more loose. Now, in worship (as to the acts and duties of it performed) there is a capacity of an entirer communion than in government, because the duties thereof are more constant.

If, thirdly, the people be fixed for worship in several bodies, but the elders fluid in a circulatory preaching (as it is pleaded), and so they are made one church, because the same elders that teach do also govern them too, and so they have a near communion in worship too, because they are at times taught by the same elders; if this (I say) be made a ground of moulding these several congregations into one church, yet it is defective, for it makes the people's communion, in enjoying the same elders at times successively, to be the foundation of church institution (yea, and in this case of the first church *proprie dicta*, or properly so called), rather than the communion of saints, and of the same persons of the saints meeting fixedly for worship. But it is hard to conceive how the oneness of a church should be settled, rather on such a temporary communion in elders, than on a constant communion in ordinances, whenas the same elders are enjoyed by these persons but at times (which is an uninterrupted* communion also); yea, and there are no times neither, wherein as to acts of worship they enjoy the same elders all together. Now that such a relation of elders, and communion in them, in such a broken way, should carry away the great privilege of a thing (becoming the ground of the institution of it) from constant communion, both of the same saints and elders, and be preferred thereto in this respect, seems strange. And if it be said, that yet the saints themselves in this way meet, and have all communion in those acts of government, though not in worship, yet first, however, it cannot be thought that an occasional communion (as acts of government comparatively are) should carry away the formation, the shaping, and the institution of the first church; secondly, the women (who though they have not the interest of jurisdiction, yet of communion, and of deprivation, and of virtual assistance by their prayers, &c., they have) are excluded, unless such churches be so framed that they also be present.

Fourthly, if we take that other presbyterial way that is practised, wherein they are fixed for communion in worship, both elders and people, but not for government, yet even here that fore-mentioned entireness of government is parted, and the communion of saints in that one respect divided; and, being divided, the ground and foundation of all and either being (as was said) the communion of saints, is thereby weakened many ways. For, 1. Still this communion is partial, and by that means each stands but upon one single basis, whereas both joined it might stand on two. For now, in

* Qu. 'interrupted'?—Ed.

this case, the communion in worship (the blessing of which should strengthen that of censures, which is a casting out of the communion) is the ground of the meetings of each congregation; but communion in government in common, is the foundation of another church over all congregations. 2. A communion of elders, rather than of the saints, is the foundation of this supposed institution of a church; and the communion of saints therein is but representative, and at second hand, themselves being absent. It is a communion for them, but not a communion of them; yea, they have no communion, not of presence in the sentence and in the execution, but are only congregations of those elders, that did make a church concerned therein; but, on the contrary, a communion of saints, even in government, is the ground and end of erecting of a church, and therefore it is called one church in relation principally unto them.

Now, then, to wind up all: if there may be such a communion of saints under the gospel, so adequate and entire, and churches so formed, as that the same saints should join in the same worship, with a joint, constant, inward, individual communion therein, and these saints may have, and do enjoy (as our brethren grant) fixed elders, by whose ministry and dispensation they partake with them in the same worship, which makes their communion yet comparatively more entire (for, in the presbyterial way, there communion is principally by elders, and therefore in this also, a due consideration is to be had, as adding a farther entireness); and these elders being a presbytery, yea, and enough to make a presbytery for all acts of government (as we shall after shew a company of elders in congregations to be), at all which acts of government, which are for the edification of the saints, they can be present and have a personal communion, as well as in those of worship; if, also, the communion of saints be the end of erection of particular churches, and is the measure fitted; for *finis dat mensuram mediis*, the end gives measure to the means; and if this end may be adequately and entirely attained this way, why should partial ends be preferred to total and complete, all ends meeting in one? Yea, if communion of saints in worship be the chief communion, yea, and the communion of saints be the principal fundamental cause of all church institution, why should not it draw to itself communion in government also, when there is a sufficiency for the performing the acts thereof? Why should the communion of elders be taken off from the communion of the saints? Why should a presbytery be erected that is taken off from a church and assembly of saints, when yet there is a sufficient presbytery over a church of saints, that meet for all acts both of worship and government, and when yet these greater presbyteries would challenge their power from this lesser presbytery of churches, rather than from the name church, and yet take it off from these churches they pretend to be a presbytery unto? Yea, why should any affirm that, although a particular congregation had a sufficiency of elders, yet it is God's ordinance that they should associate, for whereas the avoiding of division is pretended, it makes a worse division, dividing worship from government, and elders from the particular churches of saints, and so parting from them, that wherein they ought to have the entirest communion. So as, all things considered, the institution of a particular church falls most happily, uniformly, and adequately upon a congregation entirely and alone, and upon no other manner of assemblies at all.

CHAPTER XI.

That the forming of saints into churches, under the government of elders, is a matter of that needful order as requires a divine institution for it.—That it was also requisite that the extent of those churches, and the limits of the elders' jurisdiction, should be set and determined by Christ.

But this being granted, that churches in the New Testament are formed and fixed bodies, which are either the seat of worship or of ecclesiastical government, and likewise that there is a necessity it should be so, yet the next question will be, whether the settled form and order of these bodies, the extent, bounds, and compass thereof, into which the church universal should be parted and divided, and which should be the seat of government, be set out by Christ's special appointment and institution, or hath been left by him to men to frame and order, according to the common rules of edification, as matters of circumstantial order use to be. But we humbly conceive this to be a point of such order, and of so much weight and moment, and belonging to the substance of government, as that, if there were any special institution and designment of other things belonging to the order of church government, then also of this; as appears to us whilst we take estimate and comparison with any other particular acknowledged to be the subject of institution, as also established by more direct warrant. For the satisfaction of this query, we shall give the general demonstration of the ὅτι of it, that it is and must needs be so, whatever the form and extent of these churches and bodies that are the seat of government shall prove to be, which, whether congregational, classical, provincial, or national, we yet dispute not. What at the present we endeavour to make forth is only this in the general, that whatsoever kind of form or extent they are moulded into, this form and extent must be set out and taken from some institution. The *quale*, or what sort of bodies, and what measure thereof Christ hath instituted, is to be afterwards discussed. And although the proof hereof will not be full and complete until the demonstration of the *quale*, or of what is the particular form or boundary and extent, both of church and the elders' jurisdiction, and this be shewn to have been instituted, yet we shall for the present endeavour such a demonstration as shall be sufficient for a general foundation to that which follows, and enough to confirm the point as in the general.

Now, for the more distinct proceeding in this, there is a double seat of government conceived to be in these bodies of saints and elders, whether according to our brethren's principles or our own. According to our brethren's, all government is put into a body of elders, and so they make the elders the *subjectum inhæsionis*, the inherent subject of all power; and the church or the company of the faithful to be *subjectum occupationis*, that is, the subject committed to them to be governed. Even as in a corporation, where, though the power and government is in the magistrates alone, and so they are the subjects of inherency in whom the power resides, yet a limited extent of jurisdiction, namely, a corporation of people, in such a compass or precinct, is the *subjectum occupationis*, the seat, the circuit over whom and among whom their government is extended, and within which confined. But if, according to our principles, the government is instituted by Christ to be mixed of an aristocracy of elders and a democracy of the

people, yet still the like supposition necessarily ariseth, that there is, and must be, a limited seat or precinct in which this ecclesiastical government is exercised, which we call the seat of government. And look what authority is in the body of elders, as elders, it is within that seat or compass. That which therefore these following general arguments and demonstration aim at, is to prove that the extensive limits and bounds of such ecclesiastical authority, and accordingly the proportion and measure of those bodies, or churches, the seat thereof, and in which it is exercised, is a matter of that nature, weight, and moment, as to have a special line of institution, by which it may be measured forth. And to that end the demonstration hereof shall be framed and fitted to prove these two things.

1. That the forming up of elders into bodies or presbyteries, and the limits and boundaries of the extent of their power, is a matter of that nature, as must be set out by institution.

2. That, answerably thereunto, the setting out the compass, measure, limits, and extent of those bodies of saints and elders making churches (which are the seat or subject in which a company of elders shall have a jurisdiction, and that company of saints the privilege of government, and unto which the extent of their jurisdiction is to be limited), must also be set out by a special institution, and that their privilege to become such depends upon a special charter also.

We might speak to each and either of these severally and apart, but that indeed these two, the setting the limits to the extensive power of elders, and also the setting out the measure of those bodies unto which their government (whether joined with the people, or alone, we yet argue not) shall extend and be confined, are both commensurable each to other, and do mutually argue each other. For all power and government, in what company or body of rulers soever, that are the subject in whom it resides, must have a seat, compass, or precinct of men united in one in which to exercise their power. And the true measure of their extensive power is from the measure of the extent of that seat, so as the proving of either of them to be necessarily done by institution is to prove both; for they mutually argue each other, and the extent of the one is resolved into the other. And therefore if the extent of any one be of divine institution, the other must be of divine appointment also, as we shall after shew.

Seeing, therefore, that these two are so conjunct in the nature of the thing, and mutually the demonstrations each of other, we will, in discoursing of them, put them together, sometimes having demonstrations that jointly concern both and are common unto both, sometimes such as concern either of them singly, in such a method as may best serve to clear the truth of this assertion, which to us lays the foundation of deciding this great controversy, as in the sequel will appear.

We shall rank our arguments under these four heads:

1. That these two fore-mentioned are substantial points of order, and therefore are to be fetched from institution.

2. That they are matters of such order, as other things are of, which we do find (and all do so acknowledge) to have been matter of institution.

3. That the wisdom and prerogative of Christ (who is the supreme instituter and lawgiver to his church) is as much concerned and interested in the institution of these, as in any other things he hath instituted about officers and church government.

4. That spiritual reasons, suited to the nature of the things themselves, fall in to confirm this.

The truth of the consequence of these three first is justly founded upon

what we have already said of institution, as that the Colossians received their order from Jesus as the Lord, as well as their faith. And besides, that the substantials of church government should be set out by institution, all sides have acknowledged, and the case therefore must needs be like, in all matters of like order and substantialness; for the wisdom and prerogative of the lawgiver is alike concerned to appoint one as well as another; and else, too, church government consisting of things of like rank and nature, some of them should yet be divine, some human, and so it would consist some part of gold and some of wood. So as here we need but apply those generals to the confirmation hereof; but yet we shall further endeavour to confirm them all along, in the mention of, and together with, those particular proofs which we shall allege for the heads fore-mentioned. And those reasons shall not only or simply be drawn from paralleling these two points of order with other things, which are substantial in all government, and are acknowledged almost by all, especially by our brethren, to be matter of divine institution, in and about church officers and government. We shall not thus only deal by consequence in the closure of the proofs for the second head, but also by Scripture, more directly holding forth the truth thereof, and all backed and seconded with an harmony of spiritual reasons, according to the nature of the thing, falling in and suiting to it.

Only let this be taken along and remembered, that the scope of these reasons in this place is only to demonstrate this in the general, and in the ὅτι, *that it is so*, and not now to prove the point, by laying out the very particular bounds and limits set by the Holy Ghost; for that is to be tried out afterwards by our brethren and us, who of us can shew the surest and most ancient landmarks hereof; which particulars, when they shall come to be delineated and set out, and confirmed by Scripture and reason, the proof of this general truth will be found more full and complete, by whatever either side can shew to be the true and notive characters of the institution thereof. But till then we must necessarily, here in this place, content ourselves with general arguments, and which are accordingly suited to this scope, and none other.

1. I shall begin with the first head, that both these are as substantial matters in church government as any of those other about the institution of officers' power, &c., can be supposed to be. To evidence which, what fairer estimate can be taken, whereby to judge of what is substantial in this government, than from what is in all men's apprehensions such, in any government whatever? Now, take any society of men that are embodied for government, and if the officers and laws of it are defined, the commonwealth or body itself, the bounds and limits of its jurisdiction, are defined also, and by the same hand the one at first is constituted, the other is too; and this is true especially of such bodies as hold, from a supreme power, the charter for their government, as all churches do hold their order from Christ the supreme founder. In this case, it is every way as essential to have the body of people itself formed up into an unity, and the extent of their jurisdiction set by that supreme power, as to have officers over it, and laws by which they are governed. The first is necessary in itself for the good of those bodies (in relation to orderly government), and it is as necessary as the setting out the extent of every man's lands which he possesseth, and of which the abutments and limits are as exactly mentioned in their deeds as anything else; and thus necessary is setting down the extent of jurisdiction of every incorporate town, and accordingly set forth in their charter. Thus London is differenced from Westminster, which otherwise would be judged but one city and one incorporate body; and this was necessary in

their first edition, and to preserve distinction and entireness of government, without confusion and usurpation.

2. For the other particular, it is as necessary to confine those officers and their jurisdiction within the compass of certain seats and bodies politic, as to define and limit the acts of their power, and wherein to judge and intermeddle. In all civil bodies, kingdoms, commonwealths, &c., their laws are as exact to set down the limits of jurisdiction, the extent of power, as the degree, or kind, or sort of acts of power to be put in execution by those entrusted with it; and all officers in several provinces, or bodies incorporate, that get a commission of power from the supreme power, have in their commissions and charters as express a mention and definition of the circuit and extent of power as of their acts of power, so as a greater nullity ariseth not from any other thing than from extending power committed beyond the bounds of jurisdiction; and it is a *præmunire* as well to do an act of government out of their jurisdiction as an undue act within it, as to arrest or imprison out of their jurisdiction. And that mayors or bailiffs shall judge only within such a town or borough, is as express in their charter (or at least that the limit of their jurisdiction being determined within the same, their power without is null and void), as that they shall be mayors and bailiffs there. And thus this parallel confirms both parts of the argument, both that it is alike substantial, and also that therefore it alike depends upon the determining of the supreme lawgiver. And although this estimation be taken from man's law and civil government, yet it is in a matter that is alike common to both. If indeed church government could be supposed to be a matter of that nature, that such boundings and determinings of the seat and extent of elders' jurisdiction, in order to government, were not existent in it, and necessary thereunto, as well as to other government also, but might be transacted promiscuously without any such boundings, then indeed the form of the parallel would not carry it to erect anything in church government by a parallel from the civil. But all that do or will acknowledge any ecclesiastical government, as they do acknowledge fixed bodies of saints and elders (which the former assertion cleared), so withal they must acknowledge such a determination necessarily to be made to bound those seats of government and extent of elders' jurisdiction, either by God or men. Now, therefore, in this we only argue that the determination thereof is of that nature that it must be set out by the supreme Lawgiver, as well as other things are that concern this government. Thus much, however, is preparatory to what follows, that this assertion is most rational and coincident with the like principles of reason human, though of and about a matter spiritual. Yet because it will be said it is but an argument from men (which yet in the case of ministers' maintenance, as in other things also, the apostle useth to produce and confirm thereby the rationality of a divine ordinance about this matter, when yet there were other grounds also for it in the Scripture that it is such), therefore we will proceed to the other general head, that the forming saints into churches, and setting the bounds thereof, are matters of such order as God and Christ hath instituted, we shall endeavour to make forth (proceeding by degrees) both by paralleling these with other matters of order about officers and church government which God hath instituted, and by demonstrating that these are as great points of order as those other which Christ as a Lord hath given; and we shall also evidence it by the addition of such Scripture proofs and instances as do directly hold forth the truth thereof, and so confirm too that other parallel reason about them.

Now, to prove the parallel between this and other matters of order, let

this be premised and taken along, that this second sort of reasons, drawn from comparing these, or either of them, with other things that are instituted, and thence proving the institution of these also (though we insist not only or wholly on them) is in this case just and sure; for we stretch not the argument from parallel or like reason to find out any new thing in church government, whose existency is argued and founded merely upon parallel reason. That way of reasoning we leave to our brethren, in rearing up their whole fabric upon the parallel reason of a particular church, Mat. xviii., to the prejudice of that foundation which these are built on. But the limiting of elders' jurisdiction and the seat of their ordinary government being a thing that necessarily existeth, and which must be acknowledged to have place already, or else no orderly government can at all be supposed to be (as both sides do acknowledge); if, then, the question shall be (which is the thing now before us), whether the setting out those limits, &c., be a matter of that nature, as should be set out by the institution of Christ, as other matters of parallel nature are, or whether Christ hath left them as things of that inferior alloy and nature, and so of small moment as to be determined by the common rules for edification, as other circumstantial matters are; in deciding this case and question, and for the general demonstration of it, certainly parallel reason will carry it, that these things are to be set out by God and not left to men, especially when there shall be added unto these, scriptures that directly speak the same thing that parallel reason doth. This being premised, we shall speak to each singly.

I. We begin first with that of the bounding the extent of the power and jurisdiction of elders. That this is to be found set out by institution will appear, for the ὅτι of it in the general, both ways, either, 1, by comparing it with other matters of order, &c.; or, 2, by what the Scriptures do more directly hold forth about setting the limits of the extensive power of officers; or, 3, by reason falling in therewith.

1. It is evident, by comparing this point of order with other things which our brethren themselves, according to their principles, do hold to, and acknowledge to be matters of instituted order, in many of which we also concur with them. Let but an impartial comparison and estimate be taken and made with other things, concerning church elders and their power, which they cleave to, as instituted, even to a nullity for the want of it in other persons and things. They do shew themselves sufficiently tender and jealous of having institutions, for the exercise of any part of ecclesiastical power, and will allow none but persons authorised by an institution, and in such and such a way, to the exclusion of others for want of institution. For example, 1, why else do they exclude the body of the people from having an interest of suffrage in excommunication, or casting out of the church, or ordaining elders, and confine these acts, and all other supposed acts of government, unto elders only? 2. Although to excommunicate, &c., be an act of government that belongs to the office of eldership, yet they would allow no one elder to excommunicate alone, no, not in that church whereof he is pastor in a special fixed relation, but it must be elders united into an aristocracy, because it is by institution so implied, 'Tell the church,' &c., which is always more than one. Yea, they assert* that such an act of excommunication is null and void, if but by one elder alone. Yea, 3, if any one pastor, though never so eminent, should be set up in a lawful presbytery to be of the *quorum* in that presbytery wherein he is a member and an elder, so as nothing should be done but with and by his consent and suffrage, though not without the rest of the presbytery also (which was all that power

* Mr Rutherford's Temperate, Peaceable Plea, p. 5.

that bishops anciently challenged and exercised), yet this would be, and is denied to any, as a thing beyond that degree of power given any one man among the rest. And, 4, those that are acknowledged elders, namely, ruling elders, they would strictly debar from preaching, from praying in public, or blessing the people, or administering the sacrament, because these are acts of the preaching elder's office by institution, or else why are they excluded if Christ would not have them so? Yea, 5, though the substance of the act of ordination (which they call *missio potestativa*) be an act of the whole presbytery, ruling elders and others, yet the right of laying on of hands, which is the lesser, they allow not to ruling elders, but appropriate it to preaching presbyters in the presbytery. And, 6, although there may be many elders in a particular church that make up therein an eldership, who, when alone, without neighbour churches, did exercise all, and had complete power of excommunication, &c., within themselves (as they grant), yet when churches come to be multiplied, or there are neighbour churches whom they may associate with, many of our brethren hold that in this case they have no longer warrant or power (at least not as to the exercise of government within themselves), but are to join in common with those other elders of churches for all acts of government. And all this must be because Christ hath, by institution, so fixed the power of governing (in respect of the acts thereof), as they are not, by any other or any otherwise, to be put in execution. Yea, 7, if that the churches go and choose, &c., cull out a certain company of their officers, and all the churches in a kingdom should choose them that should be set apart for acts of jurisdiction only, and attend them in a set and constant way (as the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem was chosen), our brethren would say, that although here were elders chosen out of all the churches unto such acts as are the acts of elders, according to their principles, lawfully thus chosen, and that they make up (according to them) one body or corporation representatively of all the rest, as the national assemblies use to do; yet if these should be thus constantly set apart unto such a work, they would deny this to be lawful; and the unlawfulness must lie in this, that they are not formed up according to the institution. So that a little variation, in this kind, must still have a new institution for it, according unto them. And shall there not be the like for the bounding the exercise of elders' extensive power, which is of as much, if not far more moment, than many of these things can be supposed to be of? And then, lastly, add to all these an eighth principle, which singly and alone concludes the general point in hand, but, joined with those other, brings the forces of them all more strongly up to the conclusion. In the controversy with the bishops, there is a distinction of a double ecclesiastical power; the one *potestas intensiva*, the other *extensiva*. The one imports a further degree or kind of power, the other a further extension of power. And in both these respects they distinguished a bishop from an ordinary presbyter. In respect of power *intensivè*, a bishop might do some acts a presbyter might not do, even as a presbyter might do acts a deacon might not do, which constituted these three several orders in the church. A bishop might ordain and excommunicate, not so a presbyter. And as they made them to differ thus in acts of order, and intension of power, so in respect of jurisdiction, and in that respect chiefly, that is, that an ordinary presbyter was set over some particular flock and congregation, but a bishop was, for acts of ordinary government, set over a whole diocese, and over many congregations, to rule them in common, as making one church. And so an archbishop, though he was of the same order with a bishop (for they made those two not to constitute two several orders), yet, in respect of a larger extent in territory or jurisdiction, they were said to differ in respect of ex-

tension of power. Now our brethren, and all those who writ against this further power of extension and jurisdiction in bishops, called for an institution for such a further degree and extent of power, as well as for a new order of power, and that not only as to the large pretended power in a bishop beyond a presbyter's, but also of an archbishop over a bishop. So do we also require an institution for that power which our brethren claim. An usurpation lies not only in an undue form of government that Christ hath not instituted, as to set up one man to rule, when it is in the hands of many, which is to erect a monarchy when Christ hath ordained an aristocracy, which is the ground of exception against episcopal power. Nor doth it only lie in usurping undue acts of power, which Christ never instituted; but, further, it lies in a company of elders taking on them an extent of power, for territory and jurisdiction, larger than that extent which an evidence of institution can be produced to warrant. In this case, although a company of elders do in their proceedings take on them to execute none other but such as are due acts of government, for the kind of them, and those regulated according to such rules as the word warrants (as in respect to the sins proceeded against), nor none other acts but which belong to the office of elders; yea, and though all this be done by them, as cast and combined into a joint body (no one man amongst them assuming more power than the rest), and so this government be carried in an aristocratical way (which is the right form that Christ, according to them, hath instituted), yet if they stretch the extent of their power unto a larger line or circuit than Christ hath made the territory or seat of church government, this must needs prove an usurpation, let the pretence be never so specious, and the proceedings otherwise never so just. For extensive power must be warranted by institution, as well as intensive, or the measure or kind of power; whereas yet we perceive many that are zealous for institutions in those other things, would (so far as we can understand) have the boundaries of the extent of power ecclesiastical to be left (with other things of less moment) to be ordered only according to the common rules of edification, and of the law of nature, as human prudence shall think fit to dispose and set them out.

II. Unto which add, secondly, that God hath, both under the Old Testament, as also the New, made the bounding and setting the extent of church officers' extensive power the subject of his own institution and designment; which confirms the truth of this point in the general.

1. First, in the Old Testament (which we have not now recourse to, as our brethren use to have, as an instance that the same particular extent of government that was then should be the model of Christ's institution under the New, we shall confute that largely afterwards); this was the matter of Christ's institution. As therefore, under the Old, the several sorts of officers were appointed, and also their limits of jurisdiction, so now under the New, as Christ hath instituted the kind of officers and elders, so he should set out the extent of their jurisdiction; especially since we suppose such officers having such a power (as our brethren and we suppose) by institution, it is therefore necessary that it should be determined, either by God or man, what the extent of their jurisdiction should be. We do not herein urge the analogous like reason, of the Old Testament and the New, to raise up the like particular rule and institution, for the extent of elders' power, now as then; but only as a proof of this general maxim, that when we find the like subject of institution in the New, the reason will hold, that as there was an institution set for the bounds of the intensive power of officers among them (as of the order of priests above Levites, &c.), and their several work accordingly designed, so the bounds of jurisdiction and of extensive power, in the govern-

ment of that state and church, were set out by the same hand also. So, in like manner, Christ hath ordered things in the new gospel administration. They under the Old Testament had those that were their elders of cities and towns, whose power was bounded within their several cities and territories, and this set out by a law. They were, in the case of murder, to measure the ground, and the elders of that city unto which the field a man was killed in was nearest, were to intermeddle in it. And they had their general elders for the nation or people distinguished from the other, so that the extent of their jurisdiction was general, proportioned to the extent of the nation, who are therefore called 'the elders of the people' in general, Luke xxii. 66, and which were that Sanhedrim and 'state of elders' at Jerusalem for the nation, Acts xxii. 5, and so distinguished from those they called elders of a city, Ruth iv. 2, Judges ix. 3, 2 Kings xxiii. 8. And as in these scriptures singly, so Ezra x. 4, we have both mentioned with their titles of distinction: 'Let the elders of all the congregation stand, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof.' The one had the whole body of the nation for their jurisdiction; the other had only their several cities. Thus also the bounds of extensive power, as well as intensive, was set out by the word of the Lord in the hand of Moses. The several charge of four sort of Levites, in the things of the sanctuary, was divided amongst them to have care of, and the limits of extensive power of jurisdiction were fixed in the hands of four men over each of those companies and bodies of those Levites, as you have it, Num. xiii. 3, which were called overseers over the rest, Num. xi. 14, 22. The like might be shewn in the order of priesthood; there was the intensive power, which was equal among them all; and above the Levites (for order of office) there was by institution, in the high priest (as Aaron), a further or intense power of office, for some services above the rest; which degree of intense power was by the special call of God, Heb. v. 4. And as of a power of intension, so of extension or jurisdiction, there was a settled appointment. There were set over several companies of priests, chief priests that were in those several circuits superior to them, Mat. ii. 4 and xxvii. 1, Acts xix. 4, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, who were twenty-four in number.

2. Secondly, In the New Testament, we find the several extent of officers' power and jurisdiction to have been matter of institution. Our scope is not here to set out what the particular limits are, for that belongeth to an after discussion. But all that we shall now produce, is but to confirm the point in the general.

(1.) We find differing extent of officers' jurisdiction to have been, not only matter of institution, but also to have, among other things, put a difference upon officers, such as, in imitation hereof, the pope and the bishops challenged, in difference from ordinary presbyters. This was one thing made an apostle differ from an evangelist, and an evangelist from ordinary pastors and teachers, that an apostle had the care of all churches committed to him, whereas an ordinary elder was designed to an actual care of a church, as a governor in a family is of his house, 1 Tim. iii. 5. In the 1 Cor. v., the apostle strongly intimates the difference by a comparison of his power as an apostle, and theirs as Corinthians, and that this power differed in extent: 'Do not ye,' says he, 'judge them that are within?' Namely, yourselves, and within your own body: 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' His main scope is to shew, that in their proportion they had power to judge all within their jurisdiction, as he had in his; and that as his jurisdiction was, in the extent of it, limited to all within, that is, all churches of Christ, in opposition to heathen, and he had no power, he had nothing to do to judge them without, so theirs was also extended to all

within themselves, but no further. I that am an apostle (says he) have a limited jurisdiction in my kind, and you in yours, and as I am to do my duty in my jurisdiction, so you in yours. And if the apostle would not stretch himself beyond his line (as his own phrase is) of jurisdiction set out to him, then ordinary elders much less are to go beyond theirs.

(2.) The New Testament is express for it. The Holy Ghost hath appointed the extent of elders' jurisdiction over their own flocks, and to extend to every soul therein in particular, even over the whole flock whereof they are elders, and that as a whole flock, importing an entire body of persons committed to them. Therefore, the extent of a like kind of power any further, or over any other, ought much more to have a special institution, which so far as it wanteth and cannot produce and shew the bounds for, from institution, so far it is a nullity. Now we have an express scripture concerning the elders of the church of Ephesus (whether it be congregational, or presbyterial, or diocesan, we do not now dispute, but shall afterwards try it out upon which the institution falls), that they all and every one of them had an extent of power by express commission given them to that whole flock, and that the Holy Ghost set them over that whole flock, as in charge commended to them : Acts xx. 28, 'Take heed to yourselves, and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.' Men had not chalked out the limits of this flock, nor set them out this their bounds of power and care over it, but the Holy Ghost made them overseers, that is, constituted them, as, Heb. iii. 2, it is said of Moses. And when it is said the Holy Ghost made them, it is not meant in respect of the personal call of those elders, for ordinary elders were not chosen by an immediate revelation of the Holy Ghost, as Paul and Barnabas was : 'The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas,' Acts xiii. 2. But so these elders were not made here : the constitution, or making, or appointing and instituting them, must therefore necessarily be meant of the Holy Ghost's appointing that office of elders in which they were, and that he specially was the author by his institution of that kind of designment of elders to an whole flock as elders, as their special charge, within which to take care as elders of all, and by virtue of which (they undertaking the charge) the institution and commission of the Holy Ghost fell upon them. As when a king hath granted a charter to such or such towns, to have such and such rulers over each of those whole towns, though the king put not in the officers, yet because the towns choose them, as authorised by his special charter, ordering their choice and designing their jurisdiction, it may in charge be given to them, that the king hath set them over this whole town to govern it. And what is attributed to the Holy Ghost thus, respects not a prudential management only, but the Holy Ghost's office being in a special manner to be the author of that word, and those directions of Christ, by which the apostles did give forth the pattern of ordering and framing churches to these Ephesians and other churches, therefore it is peculiarly appropriated to him to be the author of all such constitutions ecclesiastical, and this by so peculiar a prerogative, as is as proper to him as to redeem is to the Son. And therefore man may no more assume to set up a new kind of officers, or appoint them the bounds of their jurisdiction in the church, than he can redeem us. And therefore, as to the work of the Holy Ghost to the church herein, mention is made of it, parallel with Christ's redemption, in those words : 'Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood.' And one special thing which is attributed to the Holy Ghost (as an instituter and ordainer of matters in the church, and for which we cite this place) is, as to constitute the office of

elders, and the form of government, that all should take care in common (for elders, not elder, are mentioned) so to fix also the extent of their care, charge, and commission to all that flock, the church of Ephesus, whereof they are said to be elders, ver. 17. It is his institution that elders should take care, according to the extent of their relation to a particular flock, as their whole flock committed to them; and by virtue of this his ordination had they the full power of elders unto this flock. So as that such an office of elders (not one elder only), that such a flock, as an whole flock, should stand in relation to these elders in common as the seat of their care and jurisdiction,—all this was the ordination of the Holy Ghost; and if so, then the extent of jurisdiction over such a flock is instituted, as well as the office. Therefore, if these all, or any company of more elders, will challenge a new and further extent of jurisdiction, than to such a flock as Ephesus was, they must shew the like commission for that extent from the Holy Ghost; for it was by a special commission from the Holy Ghost they had power of jurisdiction to this flock. And by the same reason that their commission over this flock was by the Holy Ghost, by the same reason they must shew the like new commission for a larger from the same Holy Ghost. We will only add this, that in cases of this nature a negative argument holds; for when extent of power depends upon a superior appointment and designment, no further power than what is affirmatively declared and extended in the commission can be extended but with a nullity, yea, and with the greatest danger; and so, unless the Holy Ghost declares affirmatively the extent of elders' powers as elders, in a body united (as here he doth) over a larger company of churches, as the seat of their jurisdiction, all the elders in the world met together cannot, nor may not, challenge it. A defect of commission affirmative is exclusive in this case. Yea, farther, in that he mentions this flock as that whole flock they had commission over, he thereby speaks exclusively of any other, that as elders in a body they were to exercise authority in. As in the like case, if a king gave a charter to a mayor and company of aldermen, to rule such a company or body of men in a corporation as an whole body they were set over, it manifestly imported, not only that the extent of their power therein being by his charter, therefore they must not exercise it as such a company out of the confines thereof, without the like charter renewed; but also, on the contrary, he who is the founder of their power, and of whom they hold it, in his charter, makes that company committed to them to be all or the whole flock committed to their charge. This evidently argues that his charter sets bounds to them, restraining them from taking on them to exercise their juridical power elsewhere. So far is it from what the presbyterial principles hold forth, that in an analogous way they may make new extensions of jurisdictions, and in the same form model them.

(3.) Add to this that the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to set limits and bounds of power to several ordinary officers in the same church, wherein they are, in respect of a continual charge and service, ordinary standing officers, and where all of them are in a joint and common commission for the government thereof. And look what distinction there is in their offices, and what is proper to each office by his appointment, his command is answerably that the one should not, by assuming to exercise the part of another, entrench upon the office of another; so that he who is a ruling elder should not take on him to teach as an ordinary pastor, no, not in the church where he bears the office of an elder: 'But let him that teacheth, attend on teaching; he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that ruleth, on ruling,' Rom. xii. 6. Now, if Christ hath so set these bounds in the same,

church and body, as for any to usurp the other's office, is that ὑπερφρονεῖν, or 'taking on him above his proportion' (which he condemns, ver. 3, and prefaceth that general rule with special aim to keep each in their due bounds and station); then much more, or at least as much, hath his care extended to set down the bounds of extensive power, which they might know, that as in the same church the officers might not ὑπερφρονεῖν, so the elders of other churches ought not ἀλλοτριοπισκοπεῖν, intermeddle as bishops in another's jurisdiction (to use the apostle's allusion), nor stretch themselves beyond their line, as the apostle would not. Thus I have proved that the extent of elders' jurisdiction is to be fetched from an institution.

What is next to be demonstrated is, that the constituting and setting out the measure and extent of that church which is to be the seat of government, is also matter of divine order, and so to be fetched from an institution.

The popish and episcopal divines have appropriated that word *order* unto the constituting a church officer, and unto his ministry, whether bishop or presbyter, &c. This, in their phrase, they called being in orders, which in the thing carried this with it, viz., their being of such orders or kinds of offices as Christ had by his order appointed. But surely they narrowed the signification of it too much, for it may be extended to all institutions whatever, and, among other, to this of church state, and the constitution thereof, according to an order set by Christ.

For, 1, in that order of the church of the Colossians, in which the apostle rejoiced, the right constitution and formation of their church state must needs be a main part intended. Order (says Bishop Davenant) denotes their coadunation into one body, namely, such as in an army useth to be, and so respects the whole body itself, as united and consenting together, and so made the seat of order. Now, as the disposement and appointment of the bulk and body of the army itself, and the form, the extent, the wings thereof, is a matter of as much order, and as essential, as to appoint what officers shall be over it, or what discipline in it, so it is here; and the order of this body of the church itself must be by some hand, either human or divine; and sure it was a divine order the apostle here rejoiced in, as we have before shewed. And this will appear,

For, 1, if we consider the moment of this their church constitution and formation, we shall find it was meet and necessary that the Lord Jesus himself should appoint it; for this is the form which the efficient always gives, as well as the matter. As in natural bodies, the form constitutes them, as well as matter, so in all bodies that are the seat of government, their ordinary frame and form, wherein they are united according to a law or fundamental custom, constitutes them such (that is, as they are politic bodies), as much as being men of such a function or qualification and rank. Yea (as was said before), since a judicial power of government depends as much upon a formality of order, as it doth upon a material qualification of persons, hence, therefore, it is as necessary (as was shewed by many instances) that Jesus Christ should design out, and constitute, and authorise the form and order, and the bounds of his church, as that he should determine the qualification of the persons or functions to whom the power is committed. For acts of government, being to have his blessing in a peculiar manner, to accompany them with a spiritual efficacy, as well as acts of worship, it is as necessary for him to appoint the form or orders of that body, in which he would accompany them with that efficacy, as it is to assign out the material subject of persons and functions that are to execute it; and this our brethren assent to, making it as necessary for Christ to institute the form of government, namely, an aristocracy of elders, as to appoint the function or the persons, namely, elders

themselves. For it may fall out, and often doth, that for the matter hereof, the members of a church are not such, in respect of their lives and qualifications personal, as should be in the members of a church; and yet, because they take on them to be a church, professing the name of Christ, and public worship, &c., hence ministerially they are a true church, as truly as an ungodly, profane minister is a true minister, not in respect of his personal qualifications, but as his office is an ordinance which he bears, and whence it is that all his administrations, while in that office, are not null, nor to be reiterated. The like is to be said of the church itself, whereof he is a minister; it subserves ministerially as a church to God, rightly to have baptism and other ordinances of Christian communion administered in it, so as those ordinances are not null, though administered among such as are generally corrupt, and not fit matter to be a church. That, therefore, these ordinances come to be rightly and lawfully administered, in this church as a church, must be by virtue of Christ's institution and charter, that hath made such a company of men, so and so meeting for such ends and purposes, to be a ministerial church to him, and to be that great ordinance, which is the seat of all other ordinances.

2. It is no less than the seat, the ἑδραίωμα, the grand repository, as of truth (as 1 Tim. iii. 15), so of government and worship, and so it is the next receptive of all the promises that are made to accompany the ordinances administered therein. We say it is the seat, as of truth, so of government and worship; for, by comparing the 5th and 14th verses with that 15th, we shall find that the church of God is the same with that house of God mentioned ver. 14, and likewise ver. 5: 'If a man know not how to rule his own house well, how shall he take care of the church of God?' A church, that is, the subject of government, as compared to an house, wherein the governor of a family ruleth. And it cannot be intended of the church universal, though universally, or rather indefinitely expressed, namely, for any or for all the particular churches that are by God's appointment the subjects of government, of an elder's care and rule, as a family (to which it is here set in comparison), is of an economic or household government; for the church there spoken of is such a church as ordinary ministers take an actual special care of, like as he that is a master of a family doth of his own house more than all other. And this kind of church, to which the proper care and rule of elders is limited, as it is the subject of government, so it is the seat of truth, where by God's ordinance it is held forth with a promise to preserve it among them, and to provide that it shall be sown in the hearts of the people of God, in that great ordinance of preaching by pastors, which are God's own institution, and accordingly gifts are preserved and continued. As, if the officers, the laws and statutes by which a college or town is governed, be by charter, the incorporation itself is such much more; so now, if the church be the seat of officers, then truly if God instituteth the officers themselves to feed the flock, the flock, over whom they are set, is appointed and ordained much more, and to it, as to an ordinance of his setting up, the promise of preserving truth is made. And if it be the seat of all ordinances (as the apostle says, 1 Cor. vii. 17, 'I ordain in all the churches'), then the churches themselves, which are in this respect the ordinance of these ordinances, where he reposeth and betrusts them, and in which he blesseth them, is much more Christ's ordinance.

Yea, 3, whereas if either of these two, the bounds of elders' jurisdiction, or the churches over which they are elders, are to be fetched from divine right, it necessarily argues both; yet of the two, the institution of the bounds doth mainly and principally fall upon church, primarily upon church, and

but secondarily upon the extent of presbyteries. That of church is the more fundamental measure of the division of jurisdiction, and that of presbyteries proportioned thereunto. Thus, when it is said, 'The apostles ordained elders,' κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, 'in every church,' or church by church, it is not said that churches were made, κατα πρεσβυτέρους, according to the mould or cast of presbyters, but elders were assigned according to the mould, measure, or latitude of churches, and so the several bounds of church power is limited by the distinction of church. Thus the style of the Scripture runs, and churches were settled, and not presbyteries; and the distinction was not then taken from the names of classes and presbyteries, provincial and national assemblies, &c. And in Rev. xi. (where John takes the measuring reed in his hand), what is the subject that reed is applied to, and whereof the measure is taken? It is the temple, the church, and not presbyteries or elderships. Therefore also Mat. xviii., the style runs thus, 'Go tell the church,' which if it should be granted to be meant of the elders, in our brethren's sense, yet of elders in relation to a church, and in that respect so styled, as they are relatively the representation of some church, within which their jurisdiction is bounded. So that if there be any institution that limits the bounds of their power, it must necessarily fall upon the bound of church first. Again, our brethren's reasonings doth confirm this, for the chief weight of their arguments for the extent of the power of elders over many churches, in those instances of Jerusalem, Ephesus, &c., is taken from hence, that many congregations are called one church; and so, from the extent of elderships and elders, power is derived, and measured thereby; and the chief power that is exercised, is to cast out of the church, *i. e.* to judge them within their circuit.

To conclude: If either of these, the jurisdiction of elders, or the measure of churches, are to be fetched from institution, or set thereby, then both are to be so. The reason of this consequence is clear from this (which was but intimated afore), that all power in governors, or any other company of men whatever, must have a territory, a precinct, a seat in which, and among whom to exercise their power, and accordingly the extent or limits of that seat, is the true measure of the extent of these governors' power and jurisdiction, the one being resolved into the other. If the one be divine, the other is also; yea, so as although the Holy Ghost should not have expressly and directly set down both, yet having done either, it is sufficient; for the one follows upon the other, and so consequently (as was said) if either be of divine institution, they both are so. Now the reason of this consequence is clear, not only from common reason, in its parallel of all jurisdictions else (wherein the measure of the officer's extent of power is resolved into the measure of the bodies of men knit together in one, to such or such an extent, whether taken from place, or whatever else is made the boundary); but further, it may be particularly demonstrated, that this ecclesiastical government is according to the order of the New Testament. For suppose the power of government, whether in whole or in part, be in a company of elders, yet it is not given them simply as elders to their persons, no, nor simply as a presbytery abstractedly considered (that is, as a company of elders merely as such, continuing as they please over these and these churches, or as few as they will), but whatever jurisdiction is in them is given in relation to a seat; so as the division and partition of elderships and presbyteries, &c., and their extent and compass, ariseth from the partition and division of churches, and the extent thereof. And although what these due limits of either are is to be afterwards considered, yet these general do argue, that such are to be found set out by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XII.

That it is the prerogative of Christ's power and wisdom to determine the due limits of churches, and the boundaries of the elders' power.

The prerogative of Christ the instituter, is as much seen in assigning a due extent of power to elders, and in measuring out the just bounds wherein their authority is to be exercised, as in anything which he hath instituted.

1. Christ useth his great prerogative in setting out, and in constituting and bounding of the church that shall be the seat of government, which is his house.

1. In all civil government (and if there be a government spiritual derived from Christ, this parallel will hold) the stamp of royal and supreme authority, which is the fountain of government, is seen and exercised in nothing more than in the grant of privileges unto a company of men dwelling together to incorporate for government, as also in setting the bounds and limits of such a jurisdiction; and this is fundamental to all the rest; and answerably speaks the Scriptures. Thus in Heb. iii. 3–5, the prerogative of Christ above Moses is argued from this as the highest branch of it, that Christ was he that built the very house itself; and therefore, answerably, this is for the honour of Christ. If a king had an infinite number of subjects scattered over all the world, which could not be governed in the whole or lump, but by parts, distinguished and formed up into several bodies knit together, were it not his prerogative as much, yea more, to appoint out the several provinces or territories, and the bounds thereof, which he would have governed exactly, as to appoint the kind of officers, or acts of government? Surely it is more. Therefore, the founders and disposers of the bounds of commonwealths at first have been esteemed great, and more renowned than those that gave laws or established the several kinds of officers. It cannot be denied, but that there must be a commission from Christ to empower a company of saints, that live in a neighbourhood together as saints, to become a church to Christ, not in a mystical relation only (for that they are as saints, though they become not a seat of public worship, and of an orderly government here on earth), but further to become a subject of public worship, and also to enjoy a government among them. As the things themselves thus enjoyed are such as nothing more concerns God's glory in the world, and the good and benefit of the saints, so their becoming a church, which is the foundation of this, and unto which, as such, the privilege of these is vouchsafed, is as great a favour and privilege as could be bestowed on them; which, therefore, must needs hold as much upon a free gift and charter of Christ, the head and lord of his church, as any other thing can be supposed to do. A gift and favour it is, over and above their being saints and members of the church mystical, electively bestowed, for such they might have been, and yet never have been ordered so to meet. As to be a minister to the church, it is a favour beyond a man's being a saint, or having gifts, and none is to take that honour to himself, but he that is called of God, and hath a charter from him for the kind of ministry designed (and therefore Paul makes that great character of himself from God's putting him into the ministry) so for a company of saints to take on them the title and honour of a church, and an whole church, as every particular seat of worship and government doth, which is the title of the whole universal body of Christ, yea, to take on them the relation of a body, an whole body to Christ, this must be by a special charter and warrant, whatever company of men there be that do it. None can give that title of church, unless Christ hath given it, as none can take the title of being

a city in a kingdom, or of being a privileged place, but by charter. If none can take on him the dignity of an earl, or of a viscount, or of any officer of state, so no company of people can of themselves presume to be a city, but by special charter, much less to be a seat of government, whereby they become not simply a company, but a body politic. *Church*, in this sense, is an authoritative word, and such authority ariseth not from place or any external circumstance, no, nor from meeting, but from a charter that adds authority, and above such considerations, unto such a company.

2. That it should belong to the prerogative of Christ to determine the bounds of elders' jurisdiction, as much as to appoint the elders or kinds of officers themselves, evidently appears by its parallel. When any officers derive their governing power from a supreme state, it concerns the honour and prerogative of that state to define the extent of the division of their jurisdiction, as much as the kind of officers. If, therefore, it be universally found to be the wisdom of all supreme powers, with one consent to judge and account this bounding as justly to concern their prerogative, shall we think that Christ hath been less jealous and careful of his honour herein? Surely, either is no government at all defined by him, and no sort or kind of officers set and distinguished by him, but all is alike left to human prudence, as in civil government all these things alike are, or it must be acknowledged, that the one concerns the honour and prerogative of Christ to determine, as well as the other.

I know it may be said, that though it is necessary, yet it must be safely left to the law of nature, and to the rulers* of prudence for men to appoint it; and that yet however the partition or measure of churches' and officers' extent is divine, because God hath appointed that to be the measure which men in their prudence shall think good to appoint. But this is, indeed, to make both the extent of officers' government and the measure of the churches, and the seat thereof, to be both human, even as the extent of the power and office of civil magistrates is, and is called, 1 Peter ii. 13. And magistracy is called an ordinance of man, because the extent of it is left to men to appoint as they shall think meet. And yet, if God had either set the bounds and extent of officers' jurisdiction, or of commonwealths, which are both considerable, then had both been of divine institution; but since neither of them are so set, they are human, although in the general God hath commanded that magistrates shall have that measure of power which men and commonwealths shall give them.

I will add one thing more to strengthen Christ's prerogative in this case, that spiritual reason, suited to the nature of the thing itself, falls in to prove both the bounding the elders' power, and the bounds of churches as the seat of government.

1. I argue from the rise of the call of elders. For though it were true, as some say, that all saints as saints, or as they are mystical members of the church universal, have a full and immediate right, without any further relation of order and union to a particular church, *ipso facto* to enjoy all ordinances, yet take elders, or ministers, and church governors as such, and they cannot be supposed to have it simply as members of the church catholic, nor have they it from their having gifts. The law of nature they cannot plead, why they should have that power rather than other persons in the church; and Christ's charter immediately they have not, as naming their persons. From whence, then, must it be that they have their power as elders, but from an instituted relation? This must be, then, some other instituted right and privilege given them. They are given to the church,

* Qu. 'rules'?—Ed.

and so their rise must be from their relation to a church; and by the same reason, the extent of the jurisdiction of their office must depend upon the like; for what else should give them power over these, or these churches, and not others? As it is asserted by some that the power is given to saints, yet not to saints, but as formed up into bodies; so those that will say it is given to elders, must at least acknowledge it is given to elders as knit into bodies, and set over such formed bodies. So as their jurisdiction doth depend upon a relation to, and a rise of call, either from that body, or at least into that body, which is more evident upon this further reason, than that fore-mentioned will reach to. Because God makes not elders immediately by his providential converting and working on them, for so he makes saints; and yet he gives not, say our brethren, the power to them, but as united into an orderly body by institution, in which they exercise each to other. And the case of elders' power is more depending upon an order and institution, because they are called to be elders by a designation of men. Their being elders at least is in order to a relation, and not by a providential immediate working on them, or from God's giving them gifts, or by an immediate call, as the apostles were chosen, afore God erected his church, to that end to erect it. There must be formed bodies to give a rise to their call, by designing and accepting them; and there must be a relation to those formed bodies which they are set over, which must be set out by divine appointment, which alone maketh elders, and gives them their powers; and so the rise of their call and their jurisdiction is commensurable.

2. I argue from the necessity of the thing itself. Necessary it was that the extensive power of elders should be determined (as well as the intensive) either by God or man. If by God, we have what is desired; if by man, either by the civil magistrates (and they were not Christians for above three hundred years after Christ) or by the elders themselves, and the churches, as they should agree it. Now see the inconvenience to leave this part of extensive power to be determined by men, especially by the elders themselves, whilst Christ should take on him to determine only the other. Of all sort of power, church power is that wherein, when men have any part or any pretence to it, they are more apt to be ambitious of extending it than any other. Witness the ambition of the prelates, and the usurpation of the pope, &c. And they are as apt to usurp an undue power in the extension of jurisdiction, as well as unlawful intensive authority, as we have seen in popes and bishops. The latter have assumed an undue extensive power over whole dioceses, archbishops over provinces, and primates over nations, and popes have usurped such a power over the universal church. This too large power they have all challenged, as well as too much intensive power, by which the bishops appropriate ordination to themselves, which presbyteries (say they) may not do; and the popes lay a claim to infallibility, &c. Now our presbyterian brethren quarrel at that power in bishops, and the bishops oppose that universal extensive power in the popes. Now the pope challengeth this intensive power of infallibility, but upon this right, that having such universal extensive power as the apostles had, therefore God hath enabled him (as in that case he did the apostles) with an infallibility suitable to that large extent of power; and therefore he began his usurpation, with the pretence only at first to an universal power for extent, in his title of universal bishop, and that brought on the other, and crept up with it, and is supported by it, as the ivy is by the elm. Thus Alexander the Great, being lord of all the world in his own opinion, flattered himself into the conceit of divinity, and of being a god, as annexed to that crown universal. So that men are as apt to err this way as the other, and as danger-

ously in the consequence. It was therefore as necessary that Christ should set bounds to the usurpation of men who were to be trusted with church power, as to anything else; it was necessary to prevent the claim of any one (as of bishops) to determine the form of government in the church not to be monarchical; it was necessary to prevent impertinent intermeddling in officers, to set the proper bounds of each several officer; it was necessary to prevent a lording over the flock, by setting down the acts of government proper to elders. And so, that a stretching themselves beyond their line, and an intermeddling authoritatively in churches not in their jurisdiction might be prevented, it was needful to set down by certain limits the territory of church government, seeing as true a tyranny and lording might equally arise over the church by an undue extent of jurisdiction as by the exercise of unlawful and new invented acts of church power. And all this was the rather necessary, because that if it had been left to common rules (as other things of outward order are), and by human prudence to be shared and divided, the clergy themselves, and elders of churches, were like to arrogate the determination hereof (as in all ages they have done); and if they themselves were to be the allotters of it, they would be sure to look to their share, and that wisdom (they would have it left to) would be sure to cast it so, and mould the frame of the power of jurisdiction into such an order as should advance and set up their power over all the churches. And herein the whole multitude of elders and the clergy are as apt (yea, more apt) to be tempted, as a few prelates, that usurp it singly, because the dominion extends to the *totum genus*, the whole kind of them. Meet therefore it was that the Lord Jesus himself should fix this, and determine it as much as anything else that he hath done.

Then, 3, as to the bounding the churches or bodies of saints and elders that should be the seat of church power, it agrees with all reason that Christ should keep this to him as a part of his prerogative, and that it should depend on his supreme authority. It cannot be denied, but that (as was said) for a company of saints to be a distinct fixed church within themselves, and so to be the seat of either the ordinances for worship or government, is a superadded privilege to their being saints. If pastors and teachers be ordinances and the gift of Christ, Eph. iv., then to be churches, and the privileges thereof, in and by means of which the saints come to have a propriety in these, and a special relation unto these, is a gift also, and so dependeth electively upon God's will, and so is the subject of institution as well as any other thing. And these churches of saints are not only the object of government, and in that respect the seat of it, but the privilege of government; the endowment thereof is in a special manner conferred on the churches, who are the seat of it; and thereunto is the grant primarily made, and unto them the benefit redounds. Thus in civil bodies that are the seat of government, the privilege and charter of having a government respects the whole community itself principally, and not the officers; and therefore it is called the corporation's, the town's, or the city's charter, and not the mayor's and aldermen. As, therefore, the main institution or charter falls on the seat itself, and so upon the officers and the power in them for them, and indeed on both by one and the same appointment, so answerably the Scripture style runs still upon the church, taking in the whole community of elders and people ('So I ordain in the churches,' &c., says the apostle), because that is the seat, the subject of the privilege, and so of that institution that bestows and endows it. Yea, and therefore the promise of Christ's blessing and presence is made to the church, that is the seat of government: 'I will

be present,' says Christ, 'in the midst of you,' &c., which, if it should be interpreted of a company of elders, yet it must be as relating to a church that is their seat, and to which they have a special relation, and so by virtue of the promise made to the church itself, Christ walks in the midst of the candlesticks, which are the churches. And the efficacy of this government and censures therein depends upon a special blessing, and the promise of a special blessing is always the companion of his own institution. As no acts of government, but such as are instituted, have the ordinary promise of blessing, nor in the hands of any other than such as Christ hath given the power unto, so all is confined too within that seat or extent of jurisdiction he hath appointed; and upon this ground he is specially present with those officers and those acts, in relation, and in a respect to that body or church whose elders they are, and to whom the promise is principally made, and upon whom the privilege and institution chiefly falls. In this respect, then, it must also as much belong to his power and prerogative to set out some bounds and limits of these churches, as to institute and appoint that there should be churches that should have such a privilege. And the reason is, because the greatness and worth of the privilege doth more or less depend upon the ordering the extent and bounds of that church, and will accordingly more or less redound to the good and benefit of the saints therein, as these are set and ordered. And therefore it was fit that the saints should owe this to none but the wisdom of Christ himself; yea, nothing concerns the substance of the privilege more; and therefore if the privilege itself be from Christ, then this also. Take any incorporate body, if it be a privilege to any such body to have officers and certain acts of government appointed for and over them, then it is as much so too to have also a circumscription of jurisdiction among themselves, as they are incorporate; yea, their privilege and the benefit of it depends so much upon it, that according to the ordering thereof it is rendered greater or lesser, or perhaps made as good as void, so that all depends upon the set determination of it, and had need therefore to be set out by the founder as distinctly as anything else. The benefit of all privileges depends upon bounds of enclosure, which, if left common, the privilege is impaired. The privilege of such a body lies, that inclusively they should have such a government and officers within themselves, and also exclusively be free in such and such cases from the jurisdiction of others; and if there be not something of either of these, there is no benefit or privilege in having such a government or officers; and yet neither of them can be accomplished unless the extent of the seat of government itself, and jurisdiction thereof, be set out and determined. And if so much of the privilege depends hereon (as apparently it doth), should not he appoint and set out the limits of these bodies, who is the author, giver, and bestower of the privilege itself, to whom these societies should wholly owe it, and not to the discretion of others, and who also takes on him as his peculiar to appoint both the acts of government, and affairs for it, and form of government they should be ruled by, the one being of as much consequence as the other? Thus the proportion of the greatness of the privilege and benefit of government, so much depending on it, it is meet, yea, necessary, that he that is the author of this government should define and fix it.

4. I shall further add another thing, which depends upon the former, that the efficacy of all ecclesiastical power and censures, depending on so supernatural a blessing, to subject the conscience unto those censures (against which men's consciences are apt to be as obstinate and rebellious as to any kind of punishment inflicted by men) it was as necessary that Christ himself should set out the bounds of jurisdiction, within the compass of which men

were to be subject to those whom he betrusted with the government, as to appoint any of those other things fore-mentioned; for men were like to quarrel at nothing more than the right of power in those that executed it, and nothing was more liable to exception than is this. They still might say, What have you to do to judge me, unless you can shew from Christ I am in the way of your jurisdiction? Yea, how else also should it be known to whom it belonged, and over whom to execute these censures; and who were in fault if they were not executed? The apostle therefore stirs up the Corinthians to it, as a duty belonging to them; and convinceth them of their sin (on whom it lay, and on none else), that they neglected to censure that offender, who was within their jurisdiction! 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' says he, 1 Cor. v. 12. And so far as the sword of the Spirit is not managed by that hand, where Christ hath placed it, it will be naked. And if so much of the blessing depends upon other things of as small moment, as upon the true form of government that Christ hath appointed, that is, to be administered by the many (as Paul speaks), and not by one man, a bishop, and by men in office, and not the people only, though many (as our brethren will say, in so much as for want of these some of them do account the act null and void, and to have been weakened, and as a wooden dagger); surely of these censures it may as well be imagined, they might receive a proportionable strength from the addition of the like institution of the extent of jurisdiction over those that should be within the reach of them, these being acts of the power of jurisdiction, as they have been commonly called, in distinction from those other of doctrine and the sacraments. Sure we are that Paul seems to put as much of the promise of the power to accompany it upon this, that the incestuous Corinthian was within the jurisdiction of the church of Corinth, and so had the promise of Christ's power to accompany that ordinance to that man, as upon anything else. For Christ still blesseth his own ordinance, when in that right hand he hath placed it, and it may well be thought one, if not the main reason, why the edge of this sword hath been found so blunt and dull (as Laurentius Andreas observes) that there hath been more power in one excommunication in the primitive times, than in all since, though backed with the civil sword; because it hath been in them that have not had the right of jurisdiction to execute it; that whereas Tertullian says, it was in their congregations *tanquam fulmen*, as a thunderbolt, it hath been *brutum fulmen* to us, a thunderbolt of no force; *nulla major nullitas quam defectus juris, nec major defectus quam jurisdictionis*, there is no greater nullity than a deficiency of right, nor a greater defect than that of jurisdiction.

In the conclusion of the whole, I infer from this assertion chiefly these corollaries.

1. That our brethren of the presbyterian way, if they would prove and establish their several orders, and classical, &c. assemblies, they must shew us institution for them.

2. And in this agitation let those that can produce out of the New Testament the truest, genuine, natural evidences of the bounds of an instituted church, as the seat of officers and government, carry it.

3. That an instituted church, according to the true and lawful bounds thereof, being the seat of the privilege, all power of elders and officers is to be drawn down thereto, in the exercise thereof; and in case of defect, elders are to be chosen to such a church, and not that church taken in to other elders, and also all acts of jurisdiction are to be exercised therein.

BOOK III.

Particular congregations, having a sufficient number of elders and officers, are completely enabled for all acts of government, and excommunication itself, within themselves, as well as for worship.

CHAPTER I.

That a particular congregation of saints, having a sufficient number of elders, is a complete subject of church power and government, proved: 1, *from the power which they have to examine and admit members;* 2, *from their power of suspending from the sacrament;* 3, *from their being a perfect political church.*

THIS is agreed upon by all hands, that some particular church is such a politic body, as hath entire power to cast out by excommunication; and a casting out of that particular body is consequently a casting out of all the rest, by the law of communion of churches, whether implicit (one church reverencing the judgment of another, till they see apparent cause to the contrary), or explicit, by virtue of that their association. Now the question is, what particular body or church it is, whether a fixed congregation (whereof a man is a constant member), when it hath a sufficiency of elders over it, or a presbytery of many congregations?

Proposition, One single congregation of saints, having a sufficient number of elders and officers, is an entire seat of all acts of government, and of excommunication itself, as well as of worship. The truth of this proposition will appear, if we consider the following arguments.

Arg. I. If such a church with the elders are sufficient to try and examine, and so admit ordinary members, without the help of other churches, then it is sufficient to cast them out. For,

1. The one is an affirmative act, the other a negative act, but both are acts of the keys, only turning several ways; the one opening, the other shutting; the one is but judging initial repentance, the other is a judging of occasional repentance for a gross sin. And there is as much reason you should require as evident signs of repentance from the state of nature, as you do in case of scandal. For as to men grown up, till they shew repentance, there is this prejudice against them, that they are children of wrath by nature even as well as others.

2. The not admitting of men to church ordinances, and not receiving them, is an act of as great moment to men's persons, as to be cast out. If, then, churches be betrusted with the one, why should not they be betrusted with the other?

3. If excommunication were more to the man excommunicated, than a not receiving by way of admission, yet Christ's honour is as much concerned

in what members are taken in and owned for his body, as in what are cast out.

4. In all commonwealths, to enfranchise and to cut off belong to the same power; yea, to enfranchise doth more appertain to it. For parliaments only do enfranchise strangers, but yet lower courts do cut men off by death, according to the law. And it holds in all bodies else, for in families they have power to take in servants, and power to cast out, and in colleges to admit and to expel.

Object. But it will be objected that, to excommunicate a man, is to cast him out of all churches, and therefore it is the greater act.

Ans. 1. That simply alone doth not make it greater; for a man is cast out of all churches, not formally but only consequently, because the churches have and hold communion one with another. Let the proportion be held between admission and excommunication in this, and they will be parallels; for if you will say that all churches about have an interest, because they are to reject a man that is excommunicated, so they have an interest also in admission, to receive him also if he be admitted, and they cast a reflection upon that church he is of, if they receive him not by virtue of his fellowship.

Ans. 2. A man in being so admitted into a particular church, by virtue of that fellowship, he is received occasionally into communion with any other church.

Arg. II. If a single congregation may suspend from the sacrament without consulting others, then they may excommunicate. This is evident,

1. From presbyterial principles, for those that hold excommunication to be but a casting one off from communion with the church, and not to include a further thing, viz., a formal delivering him unto Satan, do make but a very small difference between suspension and excommunication. A man excommunicated they will admit to hear, and therefore his being cast out of the communion of the church is but a depriving him of the communion of the Lord's supper, and that is also done by suspension. Only the one is but a suspension from a few acts, this from many; but both are till he repents.

If it be said that the consequent of excommunication is to avoid civil converse, which is more than suspension, we reply, that even so it is in suspension also; for there is to be a withdrawing from a brother that walks inordinately, before he is excommunicated, 2 Thes. iii. 6. Yea, because a private brother ought to withdraw converse with such an one, it is made a ground of suspension from the Lord's supper by the church, that the church should withdraw communion with him, and so suspend him.

Arg. III. Add to this, that they who are a politic church, having a sufficient presbytery and eldership, have a power to do all acts in a church, and therefore to excommunicate. But such a congregation is a politic church, and have a sufficient presbytery and eldership.

1. They are a politic church, and the least church hath thus much power, that he that hears it not, let him be as an heathen and a publican; and the greatest hath no more. All the churches in the world may add advice in difficult cases, and a reverential authority, but they cannot add power, for that Christ hath given to a church as it is a church. The presbyterial divines themselves do argue the power of excommunication in a presbytery, because it is a church; only they say a congregation is an imperfect church. Whereas there is not one Scripture in the New Testament that doth so much as call a presbytery, over many congregations, *church;* or if it did, there is then a greater thing to be proved (namely, this distinction which

the Scripture hath not made), that a congregation having an eldership is an incomplete church politic, and the other complete. All churches may be imperfect in respect of moral power, in some cases, wherein they need advice; and so a presbyterian church may be imperfect, and may run into error, and so may a provincial, so may a national, so may a general council. And if the imperfection of a church should lie in this, that it is subject to another church, and accountable thereunto (according to presbyterial principles), then also a provincial and a national church were imperfect, and by that rule they also should not excommunicate. But in a word, the imperfection of a congregational church must lie, either in respect of what they are as a church, or in respect of their eldership.

(1.) Their imperfection doth not lie in their being a church, for they have more of church than any classical meeting of elders hath, because they have both people and elders also, and so partake of both sorts, which the other doth not. And the assembly have in their vote acknowledged Mat. xviii. to intend a particular church, and the eldership thereof to be a church, although they do not acknowledge it only to be a church, and our reformed writers call congregations, *ecclesiæ primæ*, the first churches.

(2.) Neither doth their imperfection lie in their eldership, as being insufficient, for if so, then either elders are not an eldership unto them for acts of government; or they are not a sufficient eldership for all acts of governments. But,

[1.] They are an eldership or presbytery unto them for acts of government. For where there are more elders than one united in common for acts of government, there they are an eldership or a presbytery, but so there are here. This is evident in the instance of Jerusalem, brought by the assembly themselves, for they therefore prove presbyterial government over many congregations, because those elders met for acts of government, and that those many congregations were one church to those elders. Now in a particular congregation, where there are more elders than one, there is one church, and there are likewise the elders thereof, meeting (say we) with that church for acts of government, and that they may meet apart (say they) for some acts of government. Of a bishop it is said, 1 Tim. iii. 5, 'If he do not rule his own house well, how shall he take care of the church of God?' that is, to rule it, as the answering of one phrase to the other imports. And surely, if by *bishop* there be meant a particular elder, having relation unto a particular congregation, ruling in that congregation is there intended; and to suppose that the house of God, that he is to take care of and to rule, is many congregations, as met in a *classis*, is too hard a supposition, especially seeing the argument is taken from ruling his family, and he is placed in a congregation; and if the congregation should not be meant here by the house of God, the comparison went *per saltum*, by too wide a leap.

[2.] As the name church is applied to the house of meeting in our language to this day, so this is an argument that congregational meetings are churches, and so the name *rector*, which imports ruling, continues also to this day. 'Presbyters (saith Bains*) in ancient time were in great difference, or of a double sort, those who are called *proprii sacerdotes*, *rectores*, *seniores*, *minorum ecclesiarum præpositi*. The bishop had not, nor challenged not, that respective power over them, which he did over those who were numbered among his clerks, who were helps to him in the liturgy, in chapels and parishes which did depend on him as their proper teacher, though they could not so ordinarily go out to him. The first sort had power within

* Bains' Diocesan Trial, p. 66.

their churches to teach, administer, excommunicate, and were counted brethren to the bishops, and called *episcopi* or *coepiscopi*, even of the ancient; but the presbyters, which were part of their clergy, they had this directive power over them, indeed, the canons ecclesiastical allowing the same. And this power, in their own congregations, these rectors had, although they were *minorum ecclesiarum præpositi*, rulers over lesser churches. And surely they that are fit to teach their own congregation, are fit to govern their own congregation: the word to *feed the flock* implying feeding them by ruling as well as by teaching. They that are parents to beget, have power of the rod betrusted to them; and if they be fit to govern *foro interno*, then much more with others *foro externo*. It is a more apostolical work to beget, and to plant, and to multiply, than to govern men being converted. That those that should be fit to gather a church, and to bring it to fulness from small beginnings, should not be fit to govern it, and to reap the fruit of it, but that the power should be in others that are extrinseeal to their congregations, is absurd to think.'

In the classical government, if they admonish not personally only, *i.e.* each minister apart, but as a body in common, then they meet for acts of government, and that in common as united; and if there be no admonition in common wherein they all join, as an act of authority of the whole, then such admonitions proceed from the minister alone that doth admonish, and the other elders therein are but as cyphers. Now, therefore, when there is elders, and these elders united in acts and common, and those acts are acts of government, there must needs be an eldership. And this the reformed churches do acknowledge, and the commissioners of Scotland in their papers do own this to be an eldership. The reformed churches in France call it a presbytery, and the meeting of the elders over many congregations, that they call the *classis*. And what doth make a classical eldership to be a presbytery, but that materially there are elders that have relation to those congregations, and that formally they are united for acts in common?

(2.) It is as evidently true that they are a sufficient presbytery. It is true, indeed (as was said afore), no one is sufficient for any of these things; and thus for moral imperfections, power might be taken from the apostles themselves, who acknowledge this imperfection of themselves; but they have a political sufficiency. For

[1.] If it be said that the insufficiency lies in the fewness of the number, and that in a classical presbytery there are more, in answer to that, the rule saith, 'elders of the church,' and so speaks of them indefinitely; and our Saviour Christ saith in Mat. xviii., 'Where two or three are gathered,' which the presbyterial divines do interpret of the elders. In Acts xiii. 1, there are three elders mentioned at Antioch, and that they ordained two apostles, Barnabas and Paul, who (say our brethren) acted as ordinary elders, when joined together in the same act, and yet they ordained also, Acts xiv. 23. Thus the church of Colosse had two ministers, Epaphras and Archippus, and yet that church was complete, Col. ii. 10. And they were but one congregation, for they were pastors to them; 'who is a faithful minister to you,' saith he, and that in respect of teaching, for, saith he, they had 'heard it from him,' Col. iv. And when the Scripture hath not put the sufficiency upon a number, why, if there be but two, should they be excluded? And then too it may fall out, that as many elders are in one congregation as in some *classes*. It will not be denied by our brethren, that two churches may associate and make a *classis*, and one congregation may have as many elders, as these two smaller ones that do associate. And assuredly their sufficiency doth not lie, that they have relation unto many

congregations, for that this should have the influence into their sufficiency is hard to be supposed; besides that this is but a secondary relation, for the primary relation is to their own several churches, insomuch as it was sometimes affirmed by our brethren, that they were not elders to all those several congregations associated, but an eldership only. And that is but an extrinsecal relation neither, whereas that relation they have to their own is more intrinsecal, because they are chosen by them, and because they personally watch over them, and are fixed amongst them, whereas this is but raised by a mere association. And therefore this relation, that they are elders over many congregations, can add nothing to their sufficiency.

[2.] Or else, secondly, their insufficiency is supposed to lie in not having all sort of elders in this congregational eldership, both as pastor, teacher, and ruling elder. But if so, then a classical eldership may be imperfect too, for in some of these, one that hath the office of a teacher, or a doctor may be, is often found wanting; or what if all ruling elders were wanting, and only pastors met, were this an imperfect eldership? And if all sorts and kinds of elders were necessary to make up the sufficiency of an eldership or presbytery classical, then it were first necessary that every congregation should have all these sorts of elders; for a *classis* cannot oblige the congregations under them, that some should have a teacher, others a ruling elder, others a pastor, to make up all sorts among them; and besides, the first relation of all officers, being unto particular congregations, as being primarily ordained for them (for none is an officer simply made for a classical church), therefore the seat of all these sorts of officers is congregations. And so, if that the *classis* have it, it is because the congregations have all first; and if the *classes* be bound to have all to make theirs sufficient, the congregations also are bound to have all to make theirs sufficient.

[3.] Or else, thirdly, they are supposed deficient, because they want ability.

But [1.] if they are elders of the church universal (as some of our brethren affirm) and of all the world, and accordingly fit for any work of elders, as their office is, it were strange that a company of them in a congregation, two or three or more, should not be fit for all the business in that congregation.

But [2.] their inability must lie either in want of skill or want of power. If in want of skill, it must be either skill to discern the proof of the fact, for which men are to be excommunicated; and if so, then they are unable to admonish also, for they should not admonish but upon proof of the fact; and to disable a congregation, people and elders, to do that which any jury of a few men use to do ordinarily in point of life and death, is very hard. Or else their want of skill must lie in discerning, whether the sin be a sin of that nature, that it deserves excommunication for the matter of fact, if it be not repented of; but they cannot be supposed to want skill in that, for then they cannot likewise suspend from the sacrament, for they are to suspend but for such sins as, if not repented of, would deserve excommunication. Or else they must want skill to judge of repentance, or the want of it; but surely if a brother may be able to judge of the repentance of a brother, in case of a flagitious sin (which in public he should be excommunicated for, if he repented not), then a church and these elders may be able to judge of his repentance of public sins. Yea, if a particular eldership (according to presbyterial principles) do find that the man repenteth upon their admonition, though the sin be gross and heinous, they may forbear to bring him to the *classis*, and receive him again, or else their admonitions are in vain, and all must be brought however to the *classis*. And if they may

judge of his repentance, so as to prevent excommunication, then they may as well judge of his repentance, or of his obstinacy, when he is to be excommunicated.

If it be said that the fault may be so atrocious that they cannot so well judge of his repentance, the answer is,

1. Then all such sins should be brought immediately to the classical presbytery, and not to the particular eldership at all, for them to admonish or to deal with him in order to repentance.

2. The more heinous the fault is, the more apparent it is; and therefore the better they may judge of it, and the easier an excommunication should be for it.

Or, 2, their insufficiency must be supposed to lie in want of power.

But, 1, if they be a presbytery in a church, they must needs have power and authority to do all that a presbytery is ordered for, or is ascribed to it. A presbytery and presbyterial acts are relative and mutual.

2. All Christ's ordinances and means are sufficient unto his end. As a minister, if he be a true and lawful minister, hath sufficiency both of gifts and power to do what belongeth unto him as a minister, as to acts of all sorts, and the least as well as the greatest, so if Christ do ordain a presbytery to govern as a presbytery, it is a perfect means for all presbyterial acts; for God's appointments are perfect, and God's means for government are as complete as his other means, of preaching and the sacraments. A presbytery, if it be a presbytery, is as perfect as a presbytery, as a particular minister is as a minister. A minister is a complete minister, not to preach only, but to baptize; not to baptize only, but to administer the Lord's supper; not to preach one part of the counsel of God, but all; not to administer the bread only, but the cup; and if he is the minister of one sacrament, then also of another, for there are no such ministers as the bishops, deacons.* Now, look what a minister is in his kind, that elders are in their kind; and if they have power to admonish, then power to excommunicate.

3. If they be fit for one act of government, then for all acts, of all sorts and kinds (for of them we speak now); we do not say in all cases, for a case may be too difficult for them, and then they seek advice; but we speak of the kinds. If they be able, they have the power, in one as well as the other, which is proved.

1. Because our presbyterian brethren's own arguments do run from instances of one part of government to all. They cannot give instances of all acts of government done by those that they suppose to be classical churches; but they argue from some few, and those less than excommunication, as in the instance of the church of Jerusalem, they argue from the less, from having received alms, that they meant to prevent a scandal. Yea, they argue that because the synod in Acts xv. might with an authority doctrinal declare, that therefore they might excommunicate; so we argue, if a congregational presbytery may do all these, then they may excommunicate, and it is their right to do it. Our presbyterian brethren can give no instance of any one that did all; and until they have an instance that classical churches did all these, it may still be said that classical churches be imperfect. And how then shall they or we know what is a perfect presbytery, and what is not? To give them power to admonish, to suspend from the sacrament, and not to excommunicate, is to make them imperfect. If, then, they are furnished with power, they must likewise have ability; for what Christ gives power to do, to that he gives ability sufficient.

If it should be said that congregational elders do but govern *in foro interno*,

* Qu. 'bishops' deacons'?—Ed.

I answer, 1, that is the same that the bishops allowed, only unto pastors of congregations, affirming themselves had only the external judicature. Then, 2, they rule more than *in foro interno*, for they set up an outward judicature in a church, of elders, united in common, even while they admonish in common, and suspend from the sacrament in common.

So that, to conclude this argument, to say that they are insufficient for ability and power, it is, 1, a wrong to Christ in reproaching his means as insufficient to his ends. It is, 2, a wrong to the presbytery itself. It is enough to take away the power from them; but to take away a man's power and his estate, and make him a ward, under pretence that he is not able to manage it, or hath no power to do it, is the greatest wrong that can be. 3. If some elders and congregations be found insufficient, then they are insufficient to be elders; put them out, or let them only be wards; shall the law be general for their sakes? 4. If you ask what is a sufficient eldership, we ask you what is an insufficient, and wherein insufficiency lieth? And let not churches be kept imperfect (when it is their due to have a sufficient eldership), that under the pretence of that, the necessity of presbyterial government may appear. But as in case of separation, the assembly hath affirmed that if there be want of officers or the like, it is required that there be a supply, and that there be not a separation; so in congregations, let there be a sufficient eldership, let there be a supply, let not the power be taken away. For thus the bishops took away ruling elders, and did leave but one pastor in a congregation, that so they might have the better pretence to govern, and to do all themselves.

CHAPTER II.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth arguments, to prove a single congregation to be a complete subject of ecclesiastical power, drawn, 1, *from being a body of Christ completely ordained;* 2, *because worship and government are commensurate;* 3, *from the nature of excommunication.*

Arg. IV. They that are a body organised with all the members, have all the privileges of a body; but a church having a company of elders, especially if of all sorts, is a body to Christ, and completely organized. The completeness of the natural body lies not in the multitude of members, but in having all. And that such a body thus complete should not have all power that a body can be supposed to have over its members, is very strange. And again, that power and liberty which is to be given to every brother in his proportion, is to be given to every complete body of Christ in the like proportion as it is a body. Now, every brother hath power as a brother (and as it is his duty) to withdraw from him he doth judge to walk inordinately, 2 Thes. iii. 5. And then every body that is rightly organised must therefore have power as a body, in a suitable proportion, to cut off any rotten member; and if it can heal itself, to do it of itself, the law of nature will teach it, as it is a body, so to do. That is not a sound body that hath not strength to purge out its own excrements. All bodies and societies of men have power still within themselves to cast out any who are destructive to the society, so families have (every lump purgeth out its own leaven), and every particular company in a greater city have that power so far as their own company reacheth.

The power which the synagogues had and exercised, congregations surely may have now. The Sanhedrim might give the law in the abstract, direct-

ing who and what kind of persons were to be cast out, and for what; but they meddled not with the particular sentence and applying of it to any man, nor did the towns and cities that judged in their gates. Neither were the synagogues bound to advise, but only when the case was difficult, which is clear by this, that the Jews had synagogues in all the cities of the Gentiles, dispersed up and down the world, and had their several rulers in them, and they were not bound to come up to Jerusalem to the Sanhedrim. These synagogues, though they could not cast out of the temple, yet cast out of themselves they might; and therefore a man was cast out of the synagogue.

As we argue in the case of baptism of children, that God hath not straitened but rather enlarged his grace, and the liberty and promises thereof under the gospel, so we do argue here, that the liberty of such assemblies (as the synagogues were), which Christ hath now instituted, must have all the privileges they had, and so much the more, by how much, that the assemblies of the saints are now more noble than synagogues were then, they being called a temple, the house of God, a holy nation, and a royal priesthood; and upon every assembly, under the gospel, God creating a cloud and a pillar of fire, these have all the promises and privileges that the temple and the nation of the Jews had, therefore surely as much as the synagogues. The prophet Jeremiah, iii. 16, makes the privilege of every church under the gospel to be as great as that of the temple at Jerusalem, where the ark was, the place where God did choose for the Sanhedrim to sit in, and to govern that nation. 'In those days' (saith he, speaking of the times of the gospel), 'they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord' (which, therefore, must needs be meant of the times of the gospel; for the ark of the covenant of the Lord was the chiefest privilege, under the law, till Christ), 'neither shall it come unto mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more.' But, instead thereof, he takes one of a city, and one of a family, and brings them to Zion, takes not the nation, but selects some out of the nation; and gives them pastors according to his own heart, as a greater privilege than that of the ark, and therefore it is meant of congregational assemblies; for to them pastors are fixedly and properly given to feed them with knowledge and understanding. And if that every congregation enjoyeth a greater privilege than the ark of the Lord, in having such pastors, then surely it should also be governed by them, as the synagogues also were by their rulers, who were called rulers of the synagogue, not of the synagogues; for each synagogue had more rulers than one for the government of them, as they were a synagogue, Mark v. 22.

Arg. V. If the seat of worship and government be commensurable, and of equal extent, then a single congregation, as it is the seat of worship, so of government. Now for worship, none else do meet but congregations; and if the temple, altar, and worshippers, be measured by the same line, Rev. xi., the power that is in the temple is likewise so measured. If altar and judicature be of like extent also (as they are, since the end of discipline is to keep worship pure), then where the constant worship is, there should be constant discipline, especially if excommunication be a part of worship, as was said afore, as well as admonitions are. It cannot be otherwise, but that the proceedings of the whole discipline, admonitions and all, should be before the whole church, which is as well to be edified by it as by preaching; and, therefore, particular congregations are to be the seat of it. Thus we shewed before, that the main end of a church was worship, and that discipline was the appendix thereunto, to keep the worship pure; and that so Christ, under the gospel, had made the bounds of a church to be measured by that of wor-

ship: Rev. xi. 1, 'Measure the temple and the altar, and the worshippers;' and so all that belongs unto it. And this worship and government, for the state of it, are of equal extent, commensurable one to the other, which is made out by this; that all sorts of churches that ever were, had worship and government of equal extent. Before the law, when there was a church in the house, and it went in a family-way, as the worship was in the family, so the disciple* was in that family; and excommunication was a casting out of that family; so in Adam's family, it is said of Cain, that he fled from the presence of the Lord, that is, from his father's house. Whenas God did make a nation a church, the church of the Jews (as it is called, Acts vii.) in the wilderness, they did set all their tents about the tabernacle, and so, as one church, they saw the sacrifices. And when they were at Jerusalem, they had answerably a national worship, they had ordinances, as they were a national church; therefore the Sanhedrim was to sit in the place that God should choose, to be there for government, as well as he appointed the sacrifices to be there. And for that moral worship in the synagogues, so far forth as they were the seat of worship, prayer, and reading the word, &c., so they had also casting out of the synagogues. And although the Sanhedrim might make laws for what sins to do it, yet the exercise of it was by the proper rulers, who are called therefore rulers of the synagogue. It is therefore Bains his argument against diocesan churches,† that there could be no such churches, because there was no public ordinances of worship, as was in the national churches of the Jews, unto which the males came. And yet the episcopal government kept up this principle, for as they had a diocesan government, so they had a cathedral worship in the same place, as in a mother church, like that representative worship of sacrifices in Jerusalem; and they had set meetings at them, to which all came up; and therefore their principle in this was better than this of the presbyteries, for they had a worship and a government that was commensurable.

Obj. 1. The performing of acts of worship by a minister belongs to the power of order, but the power of jurisdiction is a further thing. A minister may administer the sacrament, and perform a work of order alone, but he cannot govern alone, but he must be joined with others; and therefore worship and government are not commensurable.

Ans. The question is not of the power, but of the extent of the state both of the worship and government. He that is a minister, and can alone perform an act of public worship, yet he must do it in public congregation; and so, although it be done alone by his person, yet not beyond the extent of a congregation, but still according to the limits and bounds of it. Now the seat of government, and the extent thereof, is commensurable to the seat of worship; so as, although he cannot perform an act of government alone in the congregation, but with others, yet still those others are but to be those who belong to that congregation whereto he is a minister or an elder for performing acts of worship.

Obj. 2. The apostles had a latitude of power over all sort of churches, and therefore the extent of worship, and the power of government, are not commensurable.

Ans. Although the apostles had, in their persons, power of government over all churches, yet still they exercised that power (for acts of censure), but when they were in any of these congregations, not in a consistory out of those churches, but as personally present in the churches. And therefore the apostle saith, 'When I come,' I will do so and so; and 'shall I come with a rod?' 1 Cor. iv. 19–21. And when they came to any particu-

* Qu. 'discipline'?—ED. † Bains' Diocesan Trial, p. 69.

lar church, it was an apostolic privilege proper to them, which is not communicable to other elders; they were, συμπρεσβύτεροι, 'fellow elders' (as Peter's phrase is, 1 Peter v.), in every one of those churches; and did for that time concur in the government of that church, though with the interest of an apostle. So as still, *de facto*, the exercise of all their government was in a congregation; and as they administered not the sacrament of the Lord's supper alone, or out of churches, so nor did they excommunicate, but as joined with a particular church; nor did they choose officers or elders, but as present with churches, whom these were to be officers to. They might give doctrinal directions to churches concerning government, in which they were infallibly guided by the Holy Ghost, but acts of government they performed not but in the churches themselves, and as concreted and becoming one with that particular church; and therefore the churches remained as distinct churches, notwithstanding they were under apostolical government, and many churches are nowhere called one church, because under an apostle.

Arg. VI. That a single congregation, with its elders, is an entire seat of government, is proved from the nature of excommunication itself.

1. Excommunication relateth to communion, and communion with churches is either fixed, and in a constant way, or occasional. To throw a man out of occasional communion, is not excommunication, it is but a secondary act, that supposeth first to throw him out of a fixed communion. It is but non-communion, or denial of communion, and keeping of him out of it, as all other remote churches may do. And the execution of the act is from the power of Christ; and that promise which he hath made, 'I will be in the midst among you, when thus gathered together,' Mat. xviii. 20, whereas the way of presbytery classical excommunication is as if the congregation was gathered in the name of the presbyters, and with their power, and that they could promise to be in the midst among them. Excommunication therefore, formally and properly, is a casting him out of a fixed communion; therefore that church, which actually doth hold a fixed communion with him, hath that power, and to them properly must belong the casting of him out: 'Do not ye judge them that are within? saith the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 12. And so far as any were *within* to them, so far they had power over them. Now to that particular congregation, whereof a man is a member, a man is so *within*, in respect of a fixed communion, as to no church else in the world; there is therefore a power of throwing of him out, belonging to them, which belongs to no church, nor unto all the churches in the world. Other churches can but throw him out of an occasional communion as he shall come to them, and therefore, answerably, their throwing of him out must be but occasionally, as he shall at any time offer to come to them; hence, therefore, the formal act of excommunication must needs be proper unto them whom he holdeth a fixed communion with. Add to this that other churches can throw him out but of that communion which he holds with them, and the communion ordinarily he holds with them, is but as being a member of a church associated with them, supposing such an association, and as far as their interest goes, so far their power may go, they may throw him out of their association, but no further. But excommunication is a throwing of a man out of a fixed communion of all ordinances for worship; now such a communion he holds not with other churches. They may indeed throw him out of their own *within*, which is, for the fixed part of it, but a matter of association for government; but the congregations *within*, are in respect of ordinary communion in worship. Now, answerable unto their interest is their power, and therefore excommunication is to take him from

the midst of them (' from among you,' 1 Cor. v. 13) with whom he did use to worship. The very import of the word *excommunication* is *excommuni cætu;* the formal and direct act therefore of excommunication is to throw him out of that fixed communion which he had. It is a casting out of all other churches consequently, yea, out of the visible catholic church consequently, but formally it is only out of that particular church whereof he is a member. Other churches, by virtue of their communion together, may ratify it by approving it, but that church, which the act properly concerns in the formality of it, is a particular church whereof he is a member, and therefore, answerably, the formal power must lie there. And although this government of Christ hath been never so much corrupted by a power set over congregations, yet still the act of excommunication, or at least the execution, hath been performed in the particular churches whereof a man is a member.

2. Where, and by whom that act is done that excommunicateth a man, there the power and the main of the power must lie, for the substance of the act, and there alone. But in particular congregations, and by the elders of the people thereof, that act alone is done by which a man actually is cut off from communion with all other churches, and whereby he is excommunicated; therefore that particular congregation is the only, or at least the main substantial subject of that power whereby a man is excommunicated. We have an instance in the church of Corinth, when the apostle directs them to deliver that man unto Satan when they were met together. Whether the man was excommunicated or no, it matters not; however, the direction was given, and the direction falls upon the very act itself, when and where it was actually to be executed and done, and in them it puts the power: ' When ye are met together in the name, and with the power of the Lord Jesus, deliver such a man to Satan,' 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. There is the act, and there is the power, all met together, and he speaks of the ultimate act of excommunication; and where, and in what meeting that is to be done amongst them, there the power resideth.

1. In all spiritual ordinances, the power is inseparable from the act; and therefore to make the power whereby a man is excommunicated to lie in one assembly, and the act of excommunication to be performed in another, is to divide what Christ hath put together. He that baptizeth hath the power of baptizing, and that preacheth of preaching, and so those that actually excommunicate of excommunication; and the act is more than the sentence. If, therefore, they have the greater committed to them, they must needs have the less. And,

2. Whom Jesus Christ betrusteth with the act, he must betrust them the power, because his power, whereof theirs is but the execution, doth accompany their act; and therefore Paul saith, ' when you are met with the power of the Lord Jesus, give such an one to Satan.' It is not as in civil cases; there the power lies in the sentence, but here in the execution. And indeed, the ultimate sentence lies in the execution, and is all one with it, when in the presence of all the church it is said, We deliver this man to Satan. And, therefore,

3. In Scripture the power is expressed by the act. Paul saith, ' Whom I did deliver unto Satan;' and so ordination is called the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The power of the presbytery is expressly their act; and, therefore, where the act lies, the power must lie.

Now, we ask this question, Whether a man be actually excommunicated and delivered up unto Satan until he is so delivered up at a meeting of that particular church whereof he is a member, elders and people being present? We are not now inquiring what proceedings are to go before preparatory here-

unto; but this is that we contend for, that where the act is done which ultimately excommunicates him, there the substance of the power lies.

Whereas it may be answered, that the execution is in the congregation, but the sentence is in the presbytery; as in civil courts it is, where the man is sentenced by the judges, but actually executed by the sheriffs. We reply,

1. That instances of civil proceedings will not hold here. For the sentence by the judge is that authoritative act, as by him that hath the power in law to cut the man off; but to execute the man, to put him to death, that is an act of nature which any man can do, though he that doth it is to do it lawfully, by virtue of the sentence; but the act, whereby the man is in law killed, is the sentence, and therefore he is from that time *civiliter mortuus*, dead in law. But so it is not in this spiritual act of binding of sin, and of delivering unto Satan; there must be a power and an authority that is in the persons, that doth accompany them, and that as met together. And the execution of the act is from the power of Christ, and that promise which he hath made: 'I will be in the midst among you, when thus gathered together,' Mat. xviii. 20. Whereas the way of presbyterial classical excommunication, is as if the congregation was gathered in the name of the presbyters, and with their power, and that they could promise to be in the midst among them; and however there may be many preparatory acts unto it, yet the thing is not done till it be done by them that have the power; and, therefore, if the classical presbytery will challenge it, they must all be present, but if the congregation must do it, it is an evident argument that the power lies there.

2. If the classical presbytery had the power hereof, then when they do sentence him to be excommunicated, they ought actually to excommunicate him, and complete it; for to say that the power should be in them and not the act, whenas those that do the act are to meet and gather together in the power of the Lord Jesus, is very inconsistent. If they do not actually excommunicate, what they do must be only a doctrinal direction, that the man deserveth to be excommunicated, such as the apostle put forth in case of neglect, when he gave his judgment: 'I have judged already,' saith he, 1 Cor. v. 'Let such a one be delivered unto Satan,' &c. But he acknowledgeth the power to be in them, for saith he, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' And therefore he saith not, *I* hath delivered him, but that *he be* delivered. And it is in this as in case, suppose of baptism, that a minister had neglected his duty to baptize one, and the apostle had sent to him to baptize him, and given his sentence such a one should be baptized, and should further press it, Do not you baptize such and such a one? do not you use to do it? so he speaks here, 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' Do you not use to do it? Now, as in this case, the question will be, whether the power of baptizing lay in the apostle or in the minister that upon this doth baptize? Certainly in the minister, and he doth that by an immediate commission from Christ; for he that doth the substance of the act, in him the power lies, though he may be directed in a case of neglect by an apostle when alive. And so now, though a particular congregation in case of a neglect may be called upon and urged by other churches, yet still, in the one case as in the other, in them the power lies by whom the substance of the act is done. Neither yet do we hereby intend to give that power to a classical presbytery that the apostle had over Corinth, but only we allege it thus far, that though the apostle had power to command now when absent, and if he had been present, had power to have concurred with them in the very act, that yet still the power lay in them without the apostle to have proceeded, by whom the act was to be done, according to the apostle's direction.

3. According to the presbyterial practice, it is evident that the power is

not in them, but in the congregation ; for after that they have sentenced a man to be excommunicated, and it is to be supposed that his sin is ripe for excommunication, and that he is obstinate enough to be now excommunicated, then it should be presently acted and done, if the power were in them. But they stay the execution of it in the particular congregation for three days. They give him three admonitions more, and the people are to pray for him ; and so they do manifestly *de facto* hereby put the ultimate judgment of his impenitence into the congregation, and the ultimate act of execution also. For if the man did repent, they were not to excommunicate him ; and because they judge him to continue impenitent, they do excommunicate him, according to the presbyterial practices.

If it be answered, as it is by some, that the sentence by virtue of which he standeth excommunicated is that of the classical presbytery, and that the elders of the congregations are but the *præcones*, they do not exercise the substance of the act, only declare and publish it, then we reply :

1. That here is more than a promulgation, not only because it is not presently done, but because other means of admonitions, as ordinances of Christ, are applied to him to bring him to repentance ; and if so, it is apparent that when the classical presbytery intended him to excommunication, that he was then not fit for excommunication ; for why should these authoritative admonitions of his own elders come afterwards ? They may as well continue their admonitions publicly after his excommunication. Now, if his sin were not fit for excommunication, so as they might take it upon their consciences, he ought not now to be excommunicated ; then by virtue of their sentence he is not excommunicated when he is excommunicated, for they sentenced him when his sin was not ripe for it. So that according to their own practices, they make the presbytery's act to be but a doctrinal discernment, that in such a case, if he continues thus and thus obstinate, he is to be excommunicated. But

2. That which the elders in the congregation do is more than to be *præcones* of the sentence of the presbytery, and their delivering of him to Satan actually is more than a publishing, not only because they do authoritatively as elders admonish him after the presbytery's sentence (and if they do authoritatively admonish him, certainly they do authoritatively also excommunicate him after their admonitions if he continues impenitent), but also because when it is done they call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and they do it in the name, and with the power, of the Lord Jesus. If it were a mere promulgation, there needed no invocation as an act of theirs.

3. Again, if the form of the sentence whereby the elders of the congregation do excommunicate him be considered, do not they say, We, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and with his power, deliver thee to Satan to excommunicate thee ; yea, were not that congregation in Corinth to do so, which the man belonged unto ? Whereas if the classical presbytery had the power, and these were only the publishers, then the classical presbytery were only to use those words because the power was in them, and the ministers were only to declare that such an one was excommunicated by them in the name of the Lord Jesus. And if so, then all the eldership of a congregation are to the *classis*, but even as curates are to the bishops ; and indeed the bishops' principles are more consonant to themselves than this, for they say that the act of excommunication is done and absolved, and perfected in their courts ; and that the curate doth only promulge it (as their manner is), but that the man is indeed excommunicated by the bishop. But here there is a pretence of leaving the substance of the act to be formally done and executed by the elders of the congregation, and yet a denial that a power to do it lies in

them, and the power to do it assumed to be in them, who yet profess they do not actually excommunicate.

4. If they were only *præcones*, then any man may do it, as well as the elders of his own church.

If it be objected that in a congregation itself, when it is done, it is done by one man that pronounceth it, the pastor of the place, or the like,

The answer is, 1. That as in prayer, when the pastor is the mouth of all the people unto God, he is but the mouth of those people that are present, and do join with him; and it is their act, and not the act of men absent; so it is here: in this act he is the mouth of the elders, and the whole congregation as present, as of God to throw this man out. But to make the elders of the congregation, and the whole congregation, to be but the publishers of what the presbytery hath done when they were absent, this is indeed to make them mere publishers, which any man may do; yea, they themselves may do it by fixing it upon the church door.

CHAPTER III.

The seventh argument, to prove that a single congregation is the entire seat of church power, because thus there appears a harmony in all the ecclesiastical administrations.

Arg. As we proved that the constitution falls upon particular churches, by shewing how naturally all things fall out in that way, and what distortions are in the other, so for the confirmation of the complete power of particular churches for matter of government, we shall now proceed in the like way of argument. For the upholding of the subordinations of congregational and classical assemblies, and of many congregations being under one common presbytery, made up of elders fixed to several congregations, the presbyterial divines are forced to invent multitude of distinctions and divisions, thereby to uphold their principles. They are forced to make one church for worship and another church merely for discipline; a church real, which is of the saints, the body of the faithful, that are a church to Christ, and a church representative, in their elders meeting in a classical assembly; a church incomplete and imperfect (such they make congregations); a church perfect and complete for government (such they make a classical presbytery); yea, indeed, as was observed before, they must make three sorts of churches to make up one: 1, a church of the faithful (for so the brethren are called in distinction from the elders); 2, the eldership of each congregation, a representative church thereof; and 3, a church classical, the elders of all those congregations assembled in one. They must also be put upon finding out a double presbytery for ordering of government, one congregational, the other classical, when yet they are not able to give one note or character of such distinction in the Scriptures. Yea, further, to answer our arguments, they have been fain to say that the elders of particular congregations have the relation of elders *in sensu diviso* to each congregation, but the relation only of an eldership *in sensu conjuncto*, as met in a classical presbytery, to all and each of these congregations. And then also they must find out distinctions of the difference of duties, what the elders owe to a particular church, and what to all the congregations in common. They must also make the same persons to be preaching elders in the exercise of their office to their particular congregations, and ruling elders also in the exercise of their office to all the rest, and yet are not

able to make any footsteps of any such distinction, or of any such boundary of duties. And as the reformed churches would not have made that distinction of those several sorts of elders under the New Testament, had they not had distinct and peculiar characters of some that ruled, of others that especially laboured in the word and doctrine,—Rom. xii. 8, 'He that ruleth, let him wait on ruling; he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that teacheth, on teaching,'—and unless they had found these footsteps of distinction bounding their several offices, they would never have invented these several sorts without them; so if there cannot be found like warrant for all the presbyterian distinctions, can they be able to say that Jesus Christ hath made these several sorts of churches, and these various reflections of elders and their duties, &c.? And thus, whilst to them there are many bodies and many churches, and lords many and presbyteries many, our way is single, natural, uniform, and to us there is but one church, one presbytery, having mutual relation one unto another; one church for the seat of worship, the same church for the seat of discipline, and hereby all these groundless distinctions are in a few words taken away.

Now, as in the point of institution of congregational churches, this uniformity is a confirmation to us, and the contrary is an evidence of the falseness of the constitution of the other; so when the point of power cometh to be disputed, what shall belong to each congregation, the observation of the like uniformity in ours, and distortion in theirs, confirmeth us that the power is completely and entirely in each congregation, having a particular eldership of itself. As before they are put to distinguish, so now in this to part and divide the power between the congregations and these classical presbyteries, and that for ordinary government. Their being out of the right way produceth manifold distortions; their administrations of the discipline, differing from the rules and practices held forth by Christ, and his apostles in their epistles, unto which the placing the power wholly and entirely, and completely, in a particular congregation, falleth uniform and suitable.

Presbyterial divines, finding that particular congregations were churches, and that as such they are intended in Mat. xviii., 'Tell the church,' for shame they could not take all power from them, but they must allot them some, because they were a church. And yet because they could not uphold the constant and ordinary intermeddling (and that not by way of appeal) of a classical presbytery, which did challenge its primary cognisance, and right in excommunication, as well as the congregations, however, therefore, they divided the power, and they put part of the power in one, and part in the other. They put the sentence of excommunication in a classical church, and the execution of it in the congregational; and so, indeed, they do make two sort of governments ordinary, for one and the same suit or cause or matter, and person to be proceeded against. The particular eldership of the congregation proceedeth so far as to admonish, and to suspend from the sacrament; and then when the man is obstinate, the classical congregation saith, Bring him to us ere you presume to excommunicate him, that we may admonish him again, and so he may be found further obstinate; and then, for the execution, carry him down again to the congregation, and let him be admonished before all by the elders thereof, and then again, if obstinate, excommunicate him. Surely, if to complete excommunication, there had been such divided proceedings in Mat. xviii., Jesus Christ would have said, Go tell *the churches*, and not *the church*; for it cannot be denied but that these are distinct churches, the congregational and presbyterial. Whereas, to us, as there is but one congregation and presbytery, so but one complete and

entire government, whereof the congregation is the seat. And however the knowledge of the matter may be first given to the elders, and by way of preparatory cognisance they may consider of it (to cut off accusations impertinent, and apparently defective), yet therein they proceed not by authority; but all that they do in an authoritative way, is done before the whole congregation, to the edification of all; and so there is but one sort of public proceeding, whereas our presbyterian brethren have many.

Now, to demonstrate the distortions of administrations in their way, and the nullity of founding any such divisions and parting of government and proceedings, we present these considerations.

1. According to their own principles and practices, this division of power, and proceeding, to complete an act of government and excommunication, is not paralleled with, or uniform to, the power and the proceedings, in those other subordinances of churches or assemblies which they would have erected for government. It is known that they make five several subordinations: 1, ecumenical; 2, national; 3, provincial; 4, classical; 5, congregational. And all these are built upon this one ground (the same that a congregation puts in for), that they are all churches, only the greater still having power over the lesser, as is affirmed; they are cast into these subordinations. Now, then, let but the same be granted to congregations in this its lowered condition; let it but have the same proportion of subordination to itself, in comparison of classical, that the rest have one to another; let all these contignations, that consist of lower and upper rooms, be but uniform in this model; and then, until a congregation doth miscarry in its excommunication, it must needs have all the power within itself. For classical and provincial, which are the two next subordinations, each to other, provincial and national, do not divide a power of proceeding, to complete one act of government between them (so as the classical should have one part, and the provincial another; or the provincial one part, and the national another; and so as after the lower hath performed his part, it should be brought to a higher, to complete the sentence); but each of them have an entire and complete power to perfect what they take in hand to excommunication; and matters are carried from one to another, but only by way of appeal, and that too after they have completed the sentence and execution, having full power to excommunicate within themselves. Why, then, should the congregational, in its conjunction and subordination to and with a classical presbytery, be more injured than all the rest? Why should the classical alone put in to divide the lands with them, and go half, and the greater half; and not suffer the congregational to perfect and complete the sentence of excommunication, as well as any of the other, and so all to be brought (if at all) only by way of appeal to them? Whereas now all is brought to the classical presbytery, from the congregational, in a way of imperfection and deficiency of power to complete the sentence. And this is the greater injury, inasmuch that one of the great arguments, that (until of late, and of late also) hath been pleaded for the power of classical presbyteries, and so of synods, is but from the analogy of the congregation's right, that what power they have over a brother, a classis should have over a congregation (as in our kingdom, the plea of inheritance of the eldest son of a yeoman is the same with that of nobles and gentry; yea, and in the throne itself). But why alone should the poor congregations be made copyholders, when all the rest are free and entire in their own acts of judicature.

2. Our presbyterian brethren, by this, makes two courts of judicature for one and the same cause, which is not ordinarily found amongst men. It is true, indeed, in human courts, the lower have only lesser matters or faults

committed to them, debts of such a value; and higher courts have those of an higher nature, or a greater value. But look what matters are committed to them, they are able to pass a final and complete sentence upon them, and have power to execute it, if an appeal be not made; and if once a suit be put in, they have power to end it, else it is no court. But here now the congregational elders are allowed to intermeddle, and have authority in all causes, even those that are the greatest, and the most heinous sins, that deserve excommunication, without any controversy and difficulty; but then they are allowed to proceed but so far in it, and then to bring it to the classical assembly for sentence, where all must be heard over again, ere they can proceed to a sentence; and then it is brought to the people, and there it is acted over again. And thus, as they make two sorts of churches, one for discipline and another for government, and part the seat of government and discipline, so, for to complete an act of one and the same discipline, they make two several courts; and that not by parting them, by distribution of causes of less and of greater moment only, but of acts of judicature. And whereas the classis pretends that it is the perfect and complete church, and the congregational imperfect, according to these practices it makes nothing more perfect than the congregational doth, as the law did not; but when the case is brought to this same perfect church, yet it is forced to send the party down again to the congregational (which is the imperfect church), there to have the sentence completed.

3. Whereas the apostles, in their rules for public admonitions, do make them to be two or three; Titus iii. 10, 'An heretic, after one or two admonitions, reject' as obstinate. This way of proceeding makes three sort of public admonitions, to the number of six or seven. It makes three obstinacies, and three public sentences against a man that is excommunicated. First, he is admonished by a particular eldership (and we would know whether those be not public admonitions, yea or no, such as the apostle intendeth; which is done by a public court, to which we presume they will say, that all the people may come, and in that respect it is to be accounted public; or if not, yet that which is done by public persons, in a public judicature, is public admonition). Then, before they bring him to the classis, they must judge and censure him as obstinate, and that by a major vote, or he is not further to be brought (and we believe they will not censure him to be obstinate, unless he hath had one or two admonitions, and that by them); there is the first obstinacy. Then he is brought before the classical presbytery, who are to sentence him to be excommunicated (which we believe they will not do, unless they also have, by admonitions, tried whether he hath been obstinate and impenitent, or no, upon those means which they are to use also, which is admonition); then he is brought before the congregation, there he is admonished again over and over. And is it for the good of the man, or is it for the satisfaction of the people, that they may see him obstinate, that he hath so good admonitions given him? It cannot be merely for the satisfaction of his obstinacy, unless these admonitions can be supposed fit to work upon him. And then again, in the third place, he is to be judged obstinate after all those, or else he is not be excommunicated; for if he repented after all these, they are to forbear. And we may add, that they must needs make a judging of as many repentances for his absolution; and the judging of his repentance must be a personal experience. Thus they multiply public proceedings beyond the rule, whereas the proportion of Christ's patience seems to be set.

4. How doth the dividing of things thus retard their proceedings in case of open and manifest scandals! How must needs so many removes rather

harden the man than soften him, and instead of being a means of doing him good, be a vexation to him! The pretence is, that hereby scandal is avoided if the party repents; but the truth is, this enlargeth it, for either the scandal is a thing commonly known in the congregation of the people, and then it is best to have it examined and cleared, and that before them presently, if it may be, either by his repentance afore them, that they may be witnesses thereof, or by his appearing innocent. If it be not known commonly and ordinarily abroad, it is more scandal to have it brought to strangers than to have it to be kept in his own church; especially if that those of all the churches (who are interested in what the elders of the classical presbytery do) or any of them, may be present at pleasure.

5. This presbyterian way of excommunication causeth ordinances to be misplaced, a less effectual after a more effectual, for those admonitions by his own elders before the congregation, being the last (according to order of nature in all remedies, according to Christ's order and degrees of proceeding in Mat. xviii., and according to God's order in his dealing with us), must be supposed more powerfully effectual than the first. And yet, if the power of sentencing the man be in the classsical presbytery, by virtue of which he is excommunicated, that must be supposed to be more effectual to bring him to repentance. And then, also, they let their classical admonitions be the last before excommunication, whereas if those before the congregation be acknowledged to be the more effectual, then where the more effectual admonitions, according to the ordinance of Christ, are supposed to lie in order to excommunication, there the power of excommunication must be supposed to lie also.

6. A sixth distortion is, the deformity that is occasioned by putting an interest into those two sorts of churches, congregational and classical, in the point of excommunication, and dividing the power between them, one for the sentence, the other for the execution; which will appear from that interest the people have, commensurable with the power that the elders are to have. We speak not now of joining in the sentence of excommunication, and of suffrage in the judgment, which will make a distinct argument, and is as strong as any of the rest, for power of excommunication to be proper and peculiar to a congregational church, and to prove that whatever other power classical presbyteries or synods pretend to, yet of all other they can claim no interest in this, because in them there is wanting one sort or kind of judges into whose hands God hath put the power. But suppose for the present that the whole people have but an interest of presence only at the admonitions that are to be given to the party afore excommunication, and at the act of excommunication itself, and give them but the lowest kind of consent that may be, a tacit consent, when the act is to be done; yet allow them to be present, that thereby such a tacit consent may be held forth, and that they may be edified thereby, and that by mourning over the party his heart may be broken, and the more wrought upon, and their consciences may be satisfied in the justness of his excommunication, because that they are to join in the execution of it, and not so much as to eat with him afterwards. Now this interest, both presbyterian principles and preachers do give and allow unto the people of that particular church, whereto he doth belong. Yea, the papists themselves, who do hold that what is done in the congregation is but the promulgation of the excommunication already completed in the bishop's consistory, yet give so much to the people, to that particular congregation whereof he is a member, that there should be a promulgation. See the Rhemist's notes on 1 Cor. v. But presbyterian principles do give more, for they will not excommunicate if the people be

against it; yea, a whole national assembly, if they should determine it, would yet stop the execution if the people be against it. And therefore we argued afore from dividing discipline itself, and from the sentence of excommunication being given to the presbyterian classes, and the execution unto the elders in the congregations, so we shall now argue from the deformity or distortion that is between the power given to the elders of those churches as one church, compared with the interest of the people of these churches considered as one church also.

The interest that these classical elders come to have together with the elders of the congregation in the sentence, must be because that they are elders of all those congregations as of one church. For the strength of the argument that is alleged by the presbyterial divines for such a classical eldership, is, that many congregations make one church, whereof these elders in common are the representation; and when they pronounce the sentence of excommunication, as elders of all those congregations, as one church, which they are an eldership unto, and by that one individual act of theirs, the man is authoritatively, and (so far as concerns the interest of elders) in a special manner, excommunicated out of all those congregations whereto they are an eldership, as well as out of his own (so far as the sentence goes) in such a special manner, as belongeth not to the next churches of the presbyteries about, but by virtue of that fore-mentioned special relation. And this common eldership, in this sentence of theirs, must either have the relation of an eldership only to that particular church whereof this man is a member, so as that particular church and that common eldership make up the adequate relation of church and eldership, in and for this their act, or this eldership hath a relation to all the congregations. If the first be asserted, then there would be so many several relations of elderships and churches as there are churches upon occasion. For this common eldership, and this particular church, would be one church in this act for this time, and for this man's excommunication, and they would be another church at another time, in relation to another man's excommunication, in another particular church, which were absurd. And if they act in this act as a common eldership to all the congregations as one church, then the sentence doth formally cast the man (so far as the sentence goes) out of all those churches as well as out of his own, and by one single entire individual act they do, as elders to this church, excommunicate him formally out of these churches, and but virtually only, and consequently, out of all other churches belonging to other presbyteries, as out of the universal itself. And so far as the power of the sentence reacheth in this common classical presbytery, he is afterward cast out executively in that particular church whereof he is more especially a member, by the same way of authority by which he is cast out of that one church whereto he doth belong. For these classical elders, being in their vote a church representative, they represent that church whereof the man is a member, as making one with all the rest of the churches.

Now, then, make these three things proportionable: 1, make this interest of the people of all these churches, in their kind and relation, proportionable to the interest of the elders to all these churches, in their kind and relation, these making one church, and they being but a common eldership, because these are one church; and 2, make the interest of execution but answerable to the interest of sentence; yea, 3, make the interest of the elders of that particular church whereof the person is a member, but answerable to the interest of the people of that particular church whereof he is a member; and there will appear so great a distortion in the presbyterian

government, thus sharing with the congregational, as will confute and overthrow it, and such an uniform in the congregational as will establish it.

1. As for the first, there is all the reason in the world, that if these classical elders do lay the pretence to their common power and authority, because these churches are one church (and they are all one church in respect of the people as well as of all the elders), if this be the foundation of their plea, if it ariseth from this relation and respect, then look what interest the elders as elders can pretend to as one church, being one church representative, that individual and like interest must the people that are one church also lay claim to; for there is a disproportion, a great and a manifest disproportion, in giving that to the elders as elders of a church, that is not given to the people according to their proportion as a church. As then by these elders in common, the sentence of excommunication goes forth, and the man is admonished by them as elders to bring him to repentance, and this is a common act of that whole eldership, making a church to all these churches, so the people must be present at these or some other admonitions of the person (and that both for their edification and for to work repentance in the party), that their tacit consent by presence might be given, and that they (seeing they are to execute it) might be satisfied in his being cast out. If, indeed, the people had, as a church, no interest at all, then we acknowledge this argument would wholly fail, and these elders must have the whole full and entire power to give sentence, to execute, to admonish, and all were to be done there in the classical assembly, and nowhere else, but the whole business would be there completed.

(1.) If it be said, first, that the power of sentencing, and so of the act of excommunication, is performed in this common presbytery, and that what is done in the particular congregation whereunto he belongeth, is but the promulgation of it;

Besides what was said against that before, this further here may be added, that the interest which the people have is not merely to have it promulged before them, but that they may be edified, and that they knowing the party, he having lived amongst them, may mourn over him, yea, and bewail that such a scandal is fallen amongst them, whereby their ordinances and communion was in danger of being defiled, &c., and that the man hereby may be wrought upon; yea, and it is necessary that the man be brought afore that church, where he is personally to be excommunicated. Now, all this is more still than bare promulgation of the sentence, for that might be done whether he were present or absent. Yet still, if there be an interest of promulgation, let it be in all the churches, and all these churches as met in one common church, as the elders themselves are. Or if there be an interest of being edified by the admonitions, let it be in all the churches. But how can this be? If in each congregation apart, how will your admonitions be more multiplied, that were multiplied enow afore? And if in common, how can they meet, as presbyteries are cast? Or when did they ever?

(2.) If, secondly, it be said, that it is promulged in that fixed church whereto he doth belong, in regard they have a special primary interest, because usually he receiveth the sacrament there, we shall speak to that under the third particular, by and by. Only for the present consider, that if the interest of people and elders be made up proportionally, so as that church hath a primary interest in the person, because he hath a fixed communion in the sacrament with them, which, if he there partake, would be ordinarily defiled; and other churches have but a secondary and remote interest, as *genus* hath to the *individuum*, whereas this particular congregation is as the

species to this *individuum;* then let the elders of the classical presbytery, to make things commensurable, acknowledge to have a remote and secondary interest also in their power to sentence him, and so let him come to them but at second hand. Or to make the commensurableness yet nearer, as in the matter of promulgation, the people of all the other churches have but a promulgation at second hand, by hearsay, and have no interest of presence at all; so answerably, let these elders of other churches have but the like share in that power, and the controversy is at an end; for then, as it is not at all promulged in other churches, so the man would not be at all sentenced in the classical presbyteries. But if they challenge the primary interest, and that the power by which he is sentenced belongeth unto them, then let the people of all those churches be acknowledged to have the like primary interest of promulgation also, because that they are the greater number in comparison of the church whereof he is a member, that being but a part, the other the whole, and therefore the congregation must have the lesser principal interest therein.

2. And secondly, if that the act of excommunication, that is done in his particular church, is the formal act of excommunication, by which actually he standeth excommunicated and delivered up to Satan, and not until then; let but this act of execution be but commensurable to the sentence, and then, as the sentence was denounced by those classical elders, as making elders to all those congregations as one church, so also should the execution be; and so the man must be actually excommunicated, over and over, as often as there are many particular churches to that presbytery.

3. And thirdly, if the interest of the elders of that church make an eldership to that congregation, and be made commensurable with the interest of the congregation, the one as elders, the other as people, then, first, as this church hath the primary and the fixed interest, and such a peculiar interest, as all the churches about him have not, viz., an interest of communion suitable to his casting out; as he had a fixed communion with them, it is therefore a fixed casting out, which is properly the act of excommunication; and for these reasons their consent is so required as none of all the churches about, and their satisfaction to be sought, so as of none of all the churches about. Now, then, answerably, let the eldership of this particular church have but a like power of an eldership in their relation to them as a church, and then the people's interest being consent, where consent only is required, and the elders' interest being authority and the sentence, it will follow that, as the liberty of consenting is only in this congregation, so that the authority of sentencing should only be in these elders. And as other churches do but declare their offence, if things have not been rightly administered, so the elders of other churches should do no more. At leastwise, as the consent of this people is actually required, which is not of all the other churches, and as without which, because of their interest, the classical congregation will forbear the execution of excommunication, yea, a whole assembly will; so, then, let the elders of this congregation, when they meet in this classical presbytery, have but the like privilege; that if they do dissent, and think the man is not to be sentenced, or be excommunicated, the whole classical presbytery should not have power to proceed to sentence. For will not you give as much to the elders in government, as elders of that church, as to the people? Will you prefer the interest of the people, which is otherwise laid so low, before the interest of the elders, that are over them in the Lord? And if that the elders of that church should have this prerogative in the classical presbytery, the power thereof would soon come to nothing, without disputing against it. And in this case, these classical elders are not a pres-

bytery in common, but the pastor or eldership of the particular congregation would have some kind of episcopal power in this presbytery, having a negative among them. Or suppose that the elders of his own congregation deny to promulge the sentence, and actually to excommunicate the man, will you not give them the ministerial interest of elders in the execution of the sentence of excommunication, as the elders in common had in the sentence? Or will you send other elders to do it? If so, then they, in that act, are an eldership to them only.

CHAPTER IV.

The eighth, ninth, and tenth argument, to prove a congregational church to be the due subject of ecclesiastical power; because admonitions are to be given, and excommunication to be administered, in the presence of such a church.

Arg. 8. If, further, the presence of the people in the church is to be the seat of all authoritative admonitions that go before the sentence of excommunication, made by the elders to them that are accused of public sin and scandal, for their edification, and if the act of excommunication is to be (as was granted) afore them, then the seat of the power of excommunication is not in classical elders by Christ's ordination, but in elders that are elders of a particular congregation. The reason of the consequence is clear, because the party is to be sentenced to be excommunicated upon his being judged obstinate, and he is to be judged obstinate after admonitions. That, therefore, which is the seat or place in which these admonitions are to be given, is also to be the seat of the judgment of his obstinacy, and of the sentence thereupon. It were strange that the admonitions and other proceedings that make way should be public, and the judgment and sentence should be private. It is so in no public courts. And if the particular congregation be the seat of the antecedent acts, the admonitions, and of the consequent act, the act of excommunication itself, it were as strange that only that immediate* act of the sentence should be privately done by the classical elders, and not afore the people. Besides, that the classical elders are not to sentence, is evident by this, because those that have the power to admonish, surely they must have the power to sentence. And therefore, if the classical elders cannot nor do not come to perform the acts of admonition before the people, then they cannot be those that, according to the Scriptures, have interest in the sentence as elders. Neither can they be that church which our Saviour Christ speaks of, Mat. xviii., because that the admonitions of that church are expressed as liable to be neglected, and therefore they must be supposed present at the admonitions. And as the apostle too commends it as an ordinance, that the admonition should be before the people, 1 Tim. v. 20, so classical elders cannot be present.

Now, to prove that particular congregations are the seat of public admonitions, there is that place in 1 Tim. v. 20, which gives evidence, 'Them that sin' (saith he) 'rebuke before all, that others also may fear.' It is evident here that he doth give a direction to Timothy concerning church proceedings and keeping of a spiritual court, and therefore in the verse before gives directions about receiving an accusation, and how that accusation must be proved, by two or three witnesses; and he speaks of all such public admonitions or rebukes as are to follow upon the receipt of the accusation, when it is made evident by witnesses, and of such admonitions likewise as are in order to excommunication, and for such sins as will deserve excommunication, if men be

* Qu. 'intermediate'?—ED.

obstinate (for if for any other sins, then certainly for those), and it is of sins in case of public scandal which are the subject of excommunication; therefore he saith, 'Them that sin rebuke afore all,' then when a man's sin is public and comes to be taken notice of afore all. Now he speaks to Timothy, that was an evangelist, and under him to all church officers, to the end of the world, when evangelists (who were extraordinary ministers) should be removed; and as other directions that are given to him do concern the eldership of congregations in after ages, so also this, to teach them how to behave themselves in the house of God. Now with the same breath that he doth give them power and warrant to rebuke when accusations are brought orderly to them, he withal directs (and his directions fall chiefly thereon) where these rebukes should be, not privately, but afore all; and what all? Not afore all that are their elders only, for they are to rebuke them afore all, that all may fear. Surely therefore it is intended for the benefit, not only of the elders, but of all the people.

If it be said that this place is to be understood but as that of the old law, when a malefactor was to be put to death, it was that all might hear and fear; and so these admonitions may be given privately in the consistory, and yet all may hear of it and fear. The answer is, that there is this difference between executing of corporal punishment and giving of spiritual admonitions, that the terror of spiritual admonition doth not lie in the hearsay, but it works by the people's personal hearing of it, and it is ordained so to do. The power of that ordinance (as of preaching) lies in personal hearing, and as faith cometh by hearing, so this fear must come by hearing also; otherwise it were all one as to say such a man preached a comfortable sermon that all might be comforted, or he preached the law that all might be terrified, and yet should mean that all those that were at the sermon should have comfort in it or be terrified by it. Therefore, as those that are wrought upon to fear must be wrought upon by the admonitions, so it must be by being personally present and hearing of them.

If it be said that it is in a classical assembly done in a place so public, and in a court so open, where all may come if they please, we reply that the apostle doth not only say that it should be done in a place where all may come, but he lays it as a duty upon Timothy to do it in a place where all do come, for otherwise one of the great ends of admonition is lost; he bids him rebuke them that sin afore all, 'that all may fear.' If, therefore, our presbyterian brethren will attain the end of their admonitions (that all may fear), it must be done where all do use to meet; and if so, then either their classical elders must come and meet in the particular congregations, or the particular congregations must come to them, and so all the company of people of the classical church must meet, women as well as men; for they are capable of that particular part of edification, of fearing, and why should they be excluded the benefit of it? And whether the proceedings to excommunication according to our own way, which is for the party to have his own elders, before his own people, judicially to examine the fact and to give public admonitions, edged with all sorts of Scripture, to bring him to repentance; and if he remain obstinate in the view of all, then for him to be excommunicated, or if he repents, to have that repentance appear upon the place afore all (which all suit best, and fall in with the congregational way) whether that this doth not agree more with right reason, and all the ends that can be supposed of examination, admonitions, and excommunication, either to work upon the party, or to work upon others, or for the fairness and equity of the proceedings, rather than the way of the classical presbytery, let any rational man judge.

For what hath been said of excommunication or admonition, and the ends of them, or any other end that the Scripture holds forth therein (that go before or accompany excommunication) they are better attained in this congregational government than in the other.

As, 1, for the examination of the person, that the evidence of the fact, in a judiciary way, should be before his own people, and by his own elders, is every way most equal, because that they are to join in the casting of him out, and in the execution of the sentence afterwards, and are therefore to be satisfied of the justness of his being cast out; and there is that proper communion they have held with, viz. a fixed communion, which no church else on earth can pretend to. And if the people must be satisfied at any time, if after the sentence by hearsay, and by relation (as the presbyterians themselves acknowledge), it will much more satisfy them before, when they hear the person himself examined, and all that he can say. And if that be true of Cyprian, *quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari debet*, that which concerns all, the whole community, it should be handled and transacted by all; and if that were not true, yet surely this, that what concerns all should be handled afore all.

The like, 2, holds for those public admonitions that are to be given, wherein also the people have an interest, that they may be edified thereby, as well as by preaching; for what is discipline or public admonitions but a public application of the truths of the word of God to the conscience of a scandalous sinner, to warn others and to bring him unto repentance? So as indeed acts of discipline-admonitions are the most pastoral sermon, and so are a part of the worship of God, which therefore the people of his own church must have a peculiar interest in, as they have in other sermons.

3. If it be looked at that the man is to be shamed as a means to bring him to repentance, as in 2 Thes. iii. 14; to have all these examinations and admonitions, and to have all transacted that concerns a scandalous sin before the whole church, tendeth more to this. Neither can he be thought obstinate until such time as he hath this means (which we see God hath sanctified) in a spiritual way applied to him. In a word, for the whole we say, as Baines long since said (and it hath a reason in it, therefore we quote it), that when censure is the most sharp spiritual medicine, it were ill with our church if he (speaking of their pastor) who is resident always amongst them as the spiritual physician, should never have the power of administering it. That which he saith of the pastor, to whom he gives the chief stroke in it, we say of all the elders of a congregation that are continually resident with it.

If it be said that, afore he is put to this public shame before the congregation, he should be authoritatively admonished by the eldership to see first how that would work, we reply,

1. That either his sin is notoriously known to the whole congregation already, *res famosa*, as was the case of the incestuous Corinthian; and then it is fit it should be brought instantly to the congregation, that he may be shamed; neither is it to any end that the elders should deal in the case privately with him; but as the scandal is public, the admonition should be public also, even from the first. Or suppose his sin be more private, then if the private means which Christ hath appointed hath not been used by those that bring the accusation, as telling it first to himself and exhorting him to repentance; and if that could not gain him, then taking two or three or more, who also have dealt with him, and yet could not gain him to repentance; in this case also the elders are not to meddle in it before the church till such time as those means have been used, for no man's sin is to be brought to them till he hath passed through those ways and means which Christ hath appointed; which being done, then indeed the elders may admonish him,

having thus the cognisance of it; but yet therein they are not to deal as an eldership in a judiciary way, but as those two or three brethren who are to be called to admonish him should proceed; though even such admonitions from elders would perhaps have more authority, in respect of their relation, than those of private brethren. But in case that a man hath passed through all these means, and still is obstinate and impenitent, and hath stood out Christ's proceedings, now it is the man's own fault that his sin should thus be brought to light, and now nothing will cure him but the shame of it by public admonitions before all.

Ans. 2. If (for the tenderness of his shame) he is first to be dealt withal by the elders before he be brought to the congregation, yet not by the classical elders, who are strangers to him, who, if they keep an open court, as they ought to do (as all other courts are), whither any one may come, then if not the shame of his sin, yet the dishonour of it will be greater this way than the other, whilst it is kept within the compass of his own church, and of these who are his brethren, and have known his converse, and have known also his graces. And that shame he shall have thus before strangers will be a means to harden him, whereas the shame that he shall have before his own people will work more kindly, and be a means to melt him.

Ans. 3. The presence of his own people in all these proceedings, when he is thus convicted of the sin, when he is thus admonished, and upon obstinacy cometh to be excommunicated, serveth to a further double end, both as it respects themselves (so as no church, nor no elders else whatsoever) and as it respects the person also, and his good. For it respects the congregation themselves, both by virtue of that special relation to, and communion they have with him as one body to Christ; and therefore they are to sympathise with him, to be humbled together with him for his sin, to bemoan and bewail him and themselves, that such a punishment, even as to them, should befall them, by such a sin falling out amongst them. 'You are puffed up,' saith the apostle, 'you have not mourned,' 1 Cor. v. 2. That law is to take hold on them, in respect of this proper near relation which Paul giveth: 1 Cor. xii. 26, 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular;' that is, the church of Corinth being a particular body, have a more special relation one unto another more than to any other churches. And this mourning, and the like, is to shew themselves clear of that matter, which otherwise would be a sin of that body; and as in all other relations, members of a nation mourn for the sins of a nation, members of a family for the sins of a family, so especially in this nearest special relation of all other, each member is to mourn and sorrow for the sins of a member as if it were the whole's; because a dishonour is thereby reflected also upon the whole, and an anger of God expressed against the whole; for even church sins make God to be angry with particular persons. As for that sin about the sacrament in the church of Corinth, 1 Cor. xi., particular persons were visited: 'for this cause some are weak and sick,' &c.; 'therefore,' saith he, 'judge yourselves, that ye be not judged.' It is therefore necessary, when a man's sin is ripe for public admonitions, that his own people should know it; and therefore that all these admonitions should be afore his own, that the height and aggravation of the sin thus set open before his conscience, to make him repent, should be set open also before theirs, for all those ends afore mentioned. And to think that the elders of a classical church should representatively mourn for all the rest, or that, whereas the cause of mourning is nearness of relation, that they should mourn as his own would do, cannot

be supposed. And then, 2, if it respect working upon the man, if that be the end of this bewailing and of this mourning, to break his heart, to have his own congregation thus mourning, who have thus known him, and with whom he hath communicated, and to see their hearts broken for his sin, when they have not sinned, only are of the same body with him, this must needs be an ordinance much more effectual to work upon him than if he were brought afore all the national councils in the world, who are taught* with his sin but remotely, as the body of a national church must needs be very remote to a provincial church, and this also remote in its proportion to a classical.

Now we find that the proceedings thus to excommunication are expressed to us by the very phrase *bewailing:* 'I am afraid,' saith the apostle, 'that when I come, I shall bewail some of you;' that is, I shall be enforced, as to admonish you, so to proceed further. And so in 1 Cor. v. 2, 'You have not mourned, that he that hath done this deed may be taken from among you.' To bring him before national and classical assembles, and the like, may work in a civil way more upon him, but in a spiritual way this is a means much more suited.

Lastly, for the act of excommunication itself, that then the people should be present, we need not contend for, because it is granted. And assuredly, if that they are to be present that they may mourn and wail when any is thus cast out, their presence is much more required afore, because their wailing and bemoaning of him then might have been a means to prevent what befalls him.

Arg. 9. But if besides all these interests it be found that the people of his own congregation have a joint interest to judge, and that by way of suffrage, and concur in the sentence with the elders in the throwing of him out, or have such an interest with judgment and cutting off a member that a jury have, joined with the bench of justices and judges, and that they are to judge of the fact, and of his obstinacy, and the like, why then it will clearly follow that the power of excommunication must be in every congregation of people and elders; and thus to have the man judged, both by the one and the other, is the fairest law in the world. And we account it even the glory of our nation, that no man's life is subjected to the judgment of all the judges of the kingdom, but that he must be tried by his peers, *per pares.* That we shall speak unto when we come to that head, that the people are to have a concurring interest with the elders.

Arg. 10. If no elders are to set up a consistory for ordinary government but in the presence and before the church, then the power of all acts of government must lie within the body of a congregational church, because there are no other ordinary constant church meetings of the body of the people, but only by congregations; for all such meetings are to be of as many as can meet in one place; and all are interested in it for the present, one as well as another.

CHAPTER V.

The eleventh and twelfth arguments, proving single congregations enabled to exert all acts of church power.—That such churches there were in the first ages of Christianity.—That the apostles planted such churches that had the entire power within themselves.

Arg. 11. There were in the first ages of Christianity bishops in churches and villages. And in the sense of the ages in which this was, it was all one

* Qu. 'touched'?—Ed.

as to have an entire government in a church, in a village; for the entire government was in the hands of their bishops in those times, such a government as is now claimed by the presbytery. Therefore, from the practice of the primitive times it is evident that one single congregation, with its elders, is a complete seat of government as well as worship.

Arg. 12. The churches, in the first planting of them by the apostles, were in all places congregational churches. Those in smaller cities may well be supposed to have been always such. Those in the great cities were at first such. Of Philippi, it is said that in the beginning of the gospel it was a church, and it was so called, Philip. i. 4, 15; and it was a church that had bishops and deacons, chap. i. 1, who communicated to Paul by way of giving and receiving. In a manner, all sides have acknowledged this, even the bishops themselves. Jerusalem itself at first was but one congregation, and other greater cities also were n o more; for can we imagine that the apostles should stay forming up churches till such time as they should multiply to so many as to make many congregations under classical churches? So this is not supposable, because that the apostles were to go over the world, and could not everywhere stay so long; they therefore stayed till there were a sufficient number to make up a church, and elders over them. And to be sure, the first church of all had a sufficient eldership, for they had the eleven apostles. And for them all to be officers to so small a number at the first is infinitely less disproportionable to them than for our great Lord and Master to serve and minister (as himself was pleased at his last supper to term it) the sacrament of bread and wine unto eleven apostles, and then to preach a long sermon unto these eleven whom he had taken care of. And at the first, when they were so few, as they continued in prayer together, Acts i., it is to be supposed they had the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and so were a church, seeing they had received it with our Lord and Saviour, with commission from him to do the like. And this congregational church at first having these apostles over them, who (as our brethren say) acted the part of ordinary elders, must needs be supposed to be as sufficient for a presbytery as afterwards their acts can be supposed to be when they multiplied to more congregations (as our brethren affirm). And if we could give no instance of any act of government they did, yet it is certain that the same power with which they did acts of government afterward as such a presbytery, they had then at first; for they acted but out of that power afterward which they had afore. And so in all those other churches, when they were single congregations, having elders set over them, the like must be supposed. And when there was thus congregational churches, having elders over them, they had the right, and they had the power, to exercise all acts of government within themselves, or else when the apostles left them, and commended them to the grace of God, having set elders over them, they had not been left to a sufficient means to take away offences, and to purge out scandals, and to keep the worship pure, and to preserve themselves for succession.

And if they had this right and power, they must have it by virtue of that institution, Mat. xviii. Here then, *de facto*, congregational churches were invested with a complete power. And so according to that maxim, *Primum in quolibet genere est mensura reliquorum*, the first in every kind is the measure of the rest, we have to plead, that the first churches in existence, with that power we contend for, were such congregational churches which we assert.

We further add, that suppose that these churches came to be multiplied, or to have neighbour churches near them, what became of that power and

right, which as congregations having elders in them, and as a church to Christ, they were invested with? How should this power come to be taken away, or they come to lose it, and be transferred unto an associate presbytery of many congregations? If upon this association there had been a new power, yet the old former power must be supposed to stand still entire, or else they lose it (as the cities in Germany, before they were united into that imperial body, had entire privileges within themselves, and that they retain still notwithstanding their union, only their association was for appeals and cases of common concernment); and as the multiplication was accidental, so a new accidental power might come over them, which they had not afore, if they should miscarry in that they had afore; therefore that power, which was first in them, is never to be taken from them. It is true indeed, before their multiplication, this must be said, they were independent churches, in that gross sense which is imposed upon us; that is, they were accountable unto none. Why? Because there were none near them to be accountable unto. But that was not a privilege essential, but accidental; not positive, but because there was no other near existent. And yet not so neither; for if there were any in the world, they should have appealed unto them. And suppose a congregational church, alone by itself, can be supposed to have an accidental independency private (which in this respect is a negative privilege rather than a positive), yet still that positive power, which they were entirely invested withal within themselves, for positive acts of government, that was not invested in them, because there were no other churches, but because they were a church of themselves. And this power, if once they had it, is not, by multiplication of churches, to be taken away from them. The multiplication is but accidental, but the form they were cast into at first is the essential form that constituted them a church and a politic body.

2. When these churches were multiplied, and (as our brethren would have it) continued, many congregations, under one presbytery of the elders of each of these churches thus multiplied, either that first church and their elders (which still remained fixed elders unto them) have all the power and privilege they had afore, or not, in this new government to come upon their multiplication and association. If they have the same power and privilege, then this proposition standeth good; only the question then will be, what power over them (their own remaining thus entire) in a way of dependency any other church can have, which we must afterwards speak to. If upon this association, this particular congregation have not the power it had afore entire within itself, then the form of the government first constituted is clean altered, and clearly a new form of government is set up; and that both in respect of the right of the people, and the right of the elders in that congregation. If the people had any interest of presence or of suffrage (which we contend for) at the sentence of excommunication, and the examination of things, by virtue of this new association that interest is taken from them, and removed up into the classical meetings of the elders, and into a government that is merely aristocratical. And look as in a government consisting both of people and rulers, and the interest of both, or including in it privileges that the one hath as well as the other (though the one in a lower degree), if the one becomes merely aristocratical, we count that government changed, and it will be a new form of government, so it would be here. Nor, 2dly, is it true that because the government (as our brethren affirm) is in the rulers only, therefore it may be enlarged and dispersed to other rulers of other congregations taken in with them, and the people not wronged of their right. For, first, if the charter of a people, of a corporation or body, should be that they should be ruled by their own elders (whom themselves

chose as a corporation) by their own mayor, recorder, and aldermen, yet it were a new form of government for them to come under two or three mayors, recorders, and aldermen of other incorporate towns, and they would account it so. And, 2, the rulers would think so too. As if there were a family, the master whereof had entire government within itself, and there were families increased, and they all joined in a combination to rule all those families in common, and that in such things wherein before he ruled alone; surely this would be counted a new form of government. How else doth economics differ from politics? Would not colleges think so, though associated into an university? If the colleges should have those privileges of choosing master-fellows, scholars, of admitting, of expelling, invested into other hands, if all the jurisdiction which they had when alone, or if any great part of it, should be exercised in common for them, when other colleges are built; because they become an university, they would account this a disprivileging of them. So it would be here in this case of churches.

CHAPTER VI.

Some exceptions made against the last argument, as not conclusive, removed, how we are to consider the churches, at first planted by the apostles, as patterns and examples to us.

To this argument there are many exceptions, which I shall consider.

1. It is excepted, that the first churches, though but single congregations, having elders in them, which did or might exercise all church acts, cannot yet be drawn into an ordinary pattern; because the first must, out of a necessity, do that which afterwards, when multiplied, single congregations that can associate may not do. Even as though Cain at first married his sister, yet that is no warrant for us now to do the like, when men and women are multiplied; so neither can the instance of the church of Jerusalem, or any other first churches, be the pattern to warrant single churches now multiplied to do that which they then did.

Ans. 1. The apostles did stay in places but till there were a sufficiency to set up a church; but if that presbyterian government, over many congregations, had been the rule of Christ, and that they must of necessity have been set up, they would have rather stayed, or sent an evangelist to convert so many as to make up a sufficient presbytery for a classical church. If Adam could, with his breath, have made men and women, though he had stayed a while, Cain should not have married his sister. And therefore, if that, by the ordination of Christ, a presbyterial church were the first church, God would have stayed, and the apostles would have stayed, as God stayed giving the ark, and the tabernacle, and the law of the government of a national church, till such time as the Jews became so many, as to rise to a nation.

Ans. 2. It lies upon those that affirm it, to prove that the endowing single congregations at first with an entire power was an act of necessity, and not voluntary, and as it should stand in all ages. Had a presbyterian church government been according to Christ's institution, the apostles would have taught Christians to remove out of the places where they could not make up presbyterian churches, and to go into cities, where they might make them, that so churches might be set up in their fulness at first.

Ans. 3. The power of a single congregation, to have acted as a presbytery at the first, was not grounded on a case of necessity (because there were no other churches existing to associate with, and so was accidental to them),

but this one alone congregation, was essentially, and innately, and entirely complete in itself, and within itself, as much as when afterward there were many. To say the power of eleven apostles, as combined, was defective, because but over one congregation, and but out of an extraordinary necessity, would be the greatest derogation in the world. And if there could be a supposition, that there had been other churches existing, or coming to Jerusalem, this presbytery of the first church had not been bound to associate, as not having sufficient power within itself. To affirm these things of this first presbytery of the eleven apostles (as our brethren suppose it, and it is the main foundation of their case) to have been defective, and their power (now because over one congregation) to have been founded on an extraordinary necessity only, as for Cain to marry his sister, in a way below the warrant, as of the ordinary rule; thus first to cast them (in this example) into the condition of ordinary presbyters, to make it an argument for the presbytery, and then to cast their power at first below the power of an ordinary classis, and to make it then to be dependent on a providential necessity; how derogatory is it to that transcendent power of such officers! So then, if they are to be looked upon at all as the pattern of an ordinary presbytery, then as such now, when over but one congregation, as much as if they had been over many. For to say they were but as extraordinary persons when over but one congregation, and afterwards an ordinary college of presbyters, when many, is too incoherent and inconsistent with itself to be affirmed. And then what is the reason that this first existence of an eldership over one congregation should not be as ordinary a pattern to warrant, as full and sufficient a presbytery in one congregation, as it is for the supposed presbyterial government over many? So that if it were ordinary, it serves as much for us as them; and indeed for us first, because this, as one congregation, existed first; and they were as much an ordinary presbytery at first, as at last, and endowed with the same sufficiency of inherent power. And if it were extraordinary, the instance will not serve them at all, first nor last, for a ground of presbyterial government. And surely if this church at Jerusalem had so many teachers besides apostles, as is pretended, when these congregations came to be multiplied (as is supposed) and divided, here was (if ever) enough to have made several sufficient presbyteries to these several congregations; and the association of many congregations into one can have place but in case of defect, not of sufficiency.

2. It is excepted, that we are not to consider churches as they were when the apostles first began, but as they were when the apostles left them; and that *ordo intendentis* is one thing, and *ordo generantis* is another. Thus nature first makes but a child, which afterward grows up to a man.

Ans. 1. As to the first, we argue the example of those churches which the apostles left, and, when they left them, commended them to the grace of God, as in Acts xiv., when they had chosen them elders, as having sufficient means to support themselves. And (as Bains* argues against bishops and their government over churches) those whom the apostles placed as chief, in the first constituting of churches, and left as their successors in their last farewell which they gave to the churches, they had not, nor were to have, any superior unto them in the churches, as is evident in the instance of Ephesus, Acts xx. 28, and 1 Peter v. 2. So say we, that those whom the apostles left, having placed elders over them, and left as their successors at their last farewell, commending them to the grace of God, and so constituted, without mentioning of association for government with other

* Bains' Diocesan Trial, p. 65.

churches, they, by apostolical warrant, were not to enter into such associations for matter of government and jurisdiction.

Ans. 2. As to that other part of the exception, we reply, that certainly those churches that the apostles did thus leave, and the power in them, and the presbyteries thereof, to do all church acts as a presbytery now at first, were as perfect churches the first day (as Adam was a perfect man when first created) as afterwards they could be supposed to be. If nature at first do beget a perfect child, with all the parts, it may indeed grow in stature; but all the natural parts it hath when a man, it hath when a child; and though it may grow in stature, it doth not grow in perfection, nor is defective of any of its natural powers when a child, but all exercise their natural functions when a child, as truly as when a man. And beside, join a thousand children together, they will not make one man.

3. It is excepted, that although no churches may give away their right, yet they may join with them that will corroborate their right; so if the congregation that had a presbytery afore, be multiplied into another congregation, it retains the same presbytery, and is one church still.

Ans. 1. Either it is at their liberty to retain their proper presbytery, proper to themselves, and the other congregation goes from them to have a new, or not. If it be at liberty, then Jesus Christ hath instituted two forms of government, made two several seats or subjects of entire church power, for men arbitrarily to cast themselves into, which they please. This is to make two ordinary patterns of two sorts of church government, one of a single congregation, the other of the presbyterial over many, and to warrant the sufficiency and completeness of either, when either of them have a sufficient presbytery. But that Christ should leave the government of his church so indefinite cannot be imagined; not only because it is impossible that one of them should not be better than the other, but also (as hath been said before) in respect to the congregations themselves, because the one makes a vast difference from the other in the point of fixedness and unfixedness of officers; and further, because one would destroy the other. For allow but this principle, that all congregations that may have a sufficient presbytery may retain the right and whole government within themselves, as the first subjects of it, as agreeing with the pattern, and what church will subject itself to the presbyterial government? And that this is not indifferent to all our judgments, the contentions on all hands do testify. If it be arbitrary, then it would have been unlawful for any congregation in the primitive times to have retained the right that was first settled upon them; and to have in exercise all power within themselves as whole, as when churches did multiply. If it be given as a liberty by Christ, voluntary subjection is not to take it away, and that form of government, which it doth give up its right to, being a new change of government (as was said afore) there must be as much an institution for it as there was for that right it had afore. It is impossible there should be two rights to the same thing, whereof the one is incompatible with the other; for if the congregation can claim it as its right, then the presbytery cannot; for that both should exercise it, is impossible. There may be differing interests of power in the same politic body, but that one and the same whole power should be in one, and also in a greater, and in another, cannot be imagined.

Ans. 2. To the second part of the exception, viz., that it is a strengthening of the power of congregations, and not a taking of it away, it being an intrinsecal government, we reply, 1, that of all other answers, we wonder at that; for if a master of a family, that ruled as a master afore, should have his power, in governing of his family, committed into the hands of other

masters of families, together with himself, would he account this a strengthening of his power, as he is a master of a family, or a losing of it? Masters of colleges would judge it a taking away of their power, not a strengthening of it, for by this they lost it as masters. And, 2, if that all these do rule in common, and so the major vote of them in common carries it, multitude of cases will fall out, whereto, though he gives a negative, that shall be carried by the major vote, so as he utterly loseth his power, it being thus swallowed up by the greater number, how is this a strengthening of it then? And in this case, is it not an extrinsecal power to that congregation which overrules it, as well as in the case of bishops, whenas the votes of their own officers that are proper to them, and fixed to them, whom they have chosen to watch over them, shall not carry matters that belong unto them as afore they did. 3. The strengthening of churches' power lies in countenancing of what churches have done, after they have done it, out of an honour to them, and not lightly to hear appeals from them; but it is not confirmed by taking the power out of their hands, and doing their acts for them. Thus, kingdoms in a league strengthen each other's acts, whenas they do not foster traitors against each other; but if they should mingle powers in common, this were to destroy their power and right as they be politic bodies.

If it be said, it makes churches equal still, it is granted that it is true it makes churches in a like condition indeed, but how? Not in the privileges of churches; it makes them in like condition of subjection, but not of freedom, as they are churches or incorporate bodies, to judge within themselves. As if incorporate towns should have their privilege of life and death within themselves, given up to a combination of many incorporate towns together, they were *pares* indeed, compeers; and here is an equality they are brought unto in this condition, but what equity there were in it we see not.

That I may conclude, if, when congregations are thus multiplied, a congregation that before had the government entire in itself, being invested with it, began anew to associate with others for government, either the classical elders associated have taken up the whole government and jurisdiction, and left to that congregation and elders, which once were invested with it, no part of it (which once they had proper to them afore) but as it is exercised in common; or else there is a parting and a dividing of that power and acts of government they had afore. If all be taken away, let that be affirmed and practised, and a warrant for it shewed; let the classical presbytery choose and ordain their deacons, let them suspend from the sacrament, let them only admonish, let them admit their members, let them choose their elders, let them do all. If they part it, either it must be arbitrarily, as themselves please (we will retain this, and you shall have that); and if so, then they arbitrarily part with that which was once given them by Jesus Christ; or else they part with all by a rule and a command from God, putting the bounds between what the one shall have, and what the other shall have; let these bounds then be shewn, or any instances in the primitive churches be assigned, of such alterations when churches were multiplied, which in this case is necessary. This will breed also a great alteration and change in the constitution of these congregations themselves, and their relations to their officers, as is obvious to any one who considers it.

CHAPTER VII.

Two queries resolved: 1. When a church hath but one elder, or none at all, whether it retains its power? 2. Whether a particular congregation, having complete power in itself, may oblige itself, in a constant way, to ask advice and direction from a consistory of presbyteries?—Resolved in the negative, and proved by several reasons.

I shall now resolve some queries that may be put, and in answering them, shall farther clear up my assertion, which I have demonstrated by so many arguments.

Quest. 1. Suppose a church have but one elder? Yea, suppose it have no elders at all? What is become of its power then?

Ans. 1. Yet that church, whereof there is but one elder, being the seat of this government, it is in this politic body as in the natural body. A man, according to the law of nature, hath two hands, but if one be cut off, or that he wants one, then he useth that one hand for which both were used afore. In this case, *vis recurret in proximum membrum*, the entire vigour will return into the next member. And this is properly a case of necessity, and not that other case which our brethren would have, that one congregation being alone should therefore have the government within itself of necessity, which it must part withal, according to the ordinary rule, when more congregations are multiplied.

Ans. 2. The power of government being the right of that church, and not of other churches over it, they are to choose more officers; and they have a right so to do, and so thereby to preserve the right within themselves, rather than to borrow an eye or a hand from other churches. We may say in this case, as our brethren have said in the case of not separating from a church rightly constituted, though it want an officer or officers. They say, that none ought in that case to separate, but it is to be required that officers be chosen and supplied; so say we in this case. It is in this case as it is in that of small corporations, which, although they are decayed, yet they are corporations still; and they do not lose their privileges, and they do not therefore come under other corporations to govern them, but they are enabled themselves to choose who they are that shall govern them.

Ans. 3. Their having or not having officers doth not take away their right, but only it takes away the exercise until such time as they have officers. And their not having officers, it doth not put the right into other congregations, and the elders thereof. The right in elders doth not lie in their being elders, but in having a relation unto this congregation, and in being their elders.

Ans. 4. Suppose when a congregation doth want a sufficiency of officers, and so it be disenabled to act according to its right, yet its case is but as the case of a ward, who, though he is not able to manage his own estate, yet this doth not put him by his right; and those that have the wardship for the present have not the right, they have but *quasi jus*. And if a congregation useth foreign elders, [these] elders can have a charge in it, but until such time as the congregation be able to have officers of itself. And therefore if, in cases of defect, congregations should be associated, and by virtue of their association make use of other elders, yet they are not to be kept in that defect; they ought, and they may purchase to themselves such an eldership, and so exercise their own right. The churches of Christ are not to be kept under age and wardship; yea, ye ought to reform, so as the churches should be

reduced to this, and have their rights. The bishops, because they would rule the churches, in ancient time made canons, that there should be but one minister in a church; and they took away the power of ruling elders, and so did destroy the presbytery in every church, that so in this defect there might be a colour for their government. Whatever inconveniences, therefore, may be pretended, or whatever is the present state of things, nothing ought to prejudice the rights of churches, but all congregations should have liberty to procure themselves a sufficient eldership, so to have the government within themselves.

Again, suppose that such congregations, as having a defect of elders, should subject themselves to a classical presbytery for government, until they had a sufficient eldership of their own: suppose (I say) that this should be the more ordinary condition of the most congregations in this kingdom; yet those congregations that have a sufficient eldership are not, for uniformity's sake with them, to subject themselves therein. For uniformity with what the Holy Ghost in the word holds forth as perfect, is rather to be held by those congregations who are made thus complete, than for uniformity's sake to subject themselves to the condition of those that are imperfect, that all may be alike, although that hath been the way of uniformity that hath been urged amongst us; that because all ministers cannot pray out of their own gifts, that, therefore, for uniformity's sake, there should be forms of prayer for all ministers to use, even those that God hath enabled with sufficiency of abilities and gifts to pray. It is in this case as in the bringing up of fashions, many fashions being brought up by those that had infirmities, on purpose to cover them; they who had not infirmities must be obliged to them, because they are in fashion, and brought up by some great ones.

Congregational presbyteries, they are the natural presbyteries; those others, they are but as step-dames, secondaries; they are but compounds and decompounds of the several presbyteries of presbyterial churches.

And what though a congregation want elders; they are yet a church to our judgments, and are so to be acknowledged, as the church in the Canticles was a sister, though she wanted breasts. If congregations be small, and want sufficiency of elders, they should be united many of them together to one church, that they may have a full eldership, and put themselves (though to some inconveniences) to come together to worship; for so, in the primitive times, we find that Christians did often come out of villages to their cities, to worship on the Lord's day; and sometimes removed out of the villages into the cities, that they might have ordinances.

Quest. 2. But suppose that congregations, having a sufficient eldership, have also both power and ability, and right to act within themselves, yet, in a constant way, may they not ask advice and counsel, and oblige themselves so to do; and before they proceed to excommunication against their members, if they be obstinate, bring them to the classical presbytery, as to a further means, there to be admonished, and to have the sentence of excommunication there delivered by them?

Ans. 1. All communion with classical presbyteries (which we rather look upon as synods than presbyteries) that we may lawfully hold, we will hold; and all such communion we do account lawful, as it is for such ends and purposes, for which they are ordained unto by Christ. But what is beyond the ground of erecting such associations, or of calling such synods, and the use and end of them, that will be to put an unlawful power into them; for every ordinance or institution of God is commensurable to the ground upon which it is founded. So as suppose for the present, that God had appointed synods to be held on some occasions, in case of mal-administrations

in congregations; and, in that case, had endowed synods with the same power over churches that congregations have over their own members; yet because they had this power in this case, and upon this ground, it would not draw on an obligation on the churches congregational constantly to advise with them so, and to bring their members to be admonished by them afore they proceed to censure. So as such advice as this is not a case of appeals, which always supposeth a sentence passed in inferior courts already; but it is a laying the congregation yet lower; for it is a suspending the exertion of that primary and first right, which they had, until such time as they have advised with another supposed more sufficient and able eldership.

It is with us in this particular respect, unto the presbyteries, as it is with those that were moderate separatists, in respect of their communion with the ministry of England, although we, in other cases, give more to these presbyteries than they would do to such a ministry. Many of them, as Mr Robinson and others, could communicate with the ministry of England, in hearing, and in praying, because in these actions they were not necessarily or only to be considered as ministers, by all them that should communicate with them, there being other grounds, say they, upon which they might preach and pray; and therefore, although there was an unlawful relation or respect, which they pretend to preach upon, namely, that they were ministers, yet, because there was another ground, upon which (suppose they had been no ministers) they might have preached, hence, therefore, they did, and could, communicate with them in these ordinances, so far as that other ground would bear them out. But if it came unto any act, wherein they should properly shew themselves to be ministers, in these they did abstain, and could not partake with them; for thereby (according to their principles) they might have acknowledged them to be such, which they thought they were not, and to have that authority which they thought they had not. Therefore, if it came to the receiving of the sacrament, because this is a ministerial act, they therefore would not communicate with them, no, not for one moment. So also, as touching classical presbyteries, we can and shall willingly communicate with them, in all such things wherein we think there is a ground for their erection; and so far as there is such a ground, we can preach among them, and hear them preach, where a company of elders might resolve cases of conscience, we can pray with them; yea, and have recourse to them for advice in cases of difficulty, being the elders of other churches, and able to resolve such cases. And this we can do, although we conceive that they are erected to a further end, and invested with a further power, which is to us unlawful. But wherein there is a proper acknowledgment of such a power, or that the former right of congregations mentioned shall be prejudiced, and the power and ability that Jesus Christ hath put in them impaired, we cannot do any act that shall join with them herein. We cannot do it, no, not for one moment, much less for a constancy. And the reasons why we judge congregations should not do all this, namely, advise constantly, bring their obstinate members to be admonished by the presbytery, nor require their sentence, ere they proceed to excommunicate, are these:

Reason 1. If it were no more but to advise that liberty is not to be taken from a body of Christ, enabled by him to act within itself, and purchased by him, which is not to be taken from a man by a state or commonwealth, because the law of nature hath bestowed it upon him. That liberty is not to be taken from a church in its right, which the law of Christ gives it; that is not to be taken from a man in his right which the law of nature giveth him. In all actions that a man is the guide of himself in, he is not bound to seek advice, much less that there should be a standing court erected for men to

come into. And in all the other rights that a man hath, as he is a ruler or governor of any society, as suppose he be a master of a family, in which he hath a right by the law of nature, it would be an infringement of his liberty, if in those acts that belong unto him as a master, he should be bound to advise with others, as for the putting away of a servant, &c. To direct him, indeed, in what cases he should ask advice, the exigents and necessity of the thing is the ground and foundation of it; but out of those cases it is an impairing of his liberty. Wherein he thinks there is a danger of miscarrying, and wherein he himself wants light, therein he is to ask advice, because there is a ground for it; and yet therein a man is at liberty, of whom, or with whom, he will advise; and to take that away, were to take away from the privilege of a man, if men are to preserve their native privileges. Churches are much more to stand fast in the liberty Christ hath purchased for them, Gal. v. 1.

Reason 2. That which the cities of Judah, having power and jurisdiction within themselves, were not obliged to do, nor were to oblige themselves to do (although they had a Sanhedrim, a set court set over them by God, for advice in cases difficult, and when it was too hard for them to judge), that the churches now under the gospel, having the like privileges of power within themselves, with a promise of God to be amongst them, are not to do, nor are others to usurp it; for in cases not difficult it had been an usurpation of an unlawful power in the Sanhedrim to require they should ask their advice; and it had been a diminishing of that right, and questioning of that promise of God's being with them in judgment, to have gone still and advised, in cases clear, especially to have always depended upon an authoritative sentence of judgment, required of them to be pronounced by the Sanhedrim before that they proceeded, and without which theirs should not have been valid.

Reason 3. A constancy of seeking advice, and to be bound to it, doth in itself arise unto a subjection to authority. Thus it is subjection in a child to be bound to advise with his parents in all actions of moment (whether they be clear to himself or not), as disposing of himself in marriage, and the like, and it is an acknowledgement of an authority; yea, to be bound thus always to advise with, and not to proceed without the sentence of a classical presbytery, in judgment, is of greater authority in some respect, and is more than for them to have a coercive authority over other congregations, in case they proceed amiss. It is a further limiting of them thus to tie them up that they should not exercise government without them. For magistrates may coerce the churches if they do amiss, when yet they will not oblige ministers always to advise with them, and have their sentence afore they proceed. For one minister to depend thus on another, for the exercise of his calling, is more than to be subject to the censure of another, if he doth exercise his calling amiss. It is a greater sign of servitude to do what one doth by the direction of another, than to be under authority that shall punish him if he do amiss. This latter is the case of a subject, the other of a servant. This especially is true, whenas those we should be bound to advise with do claim and challenge an authority, upon which it should be done (as those that are for the presbyterial government in a rigid way do). It was one great ground that the ancient nonconformists went upon, against yielding to ceremonies, that supposing they were things indifferent, yet to have things indifferent in the worship of God determined one way, and men obliged to practise one way, whenas God himself had left them indifferent, this was to give away that liberty which Jesus Christ had given us. Especially whenas those that urged them pretended to have a right and power from Christ to determine things indifferent in the worship of God; in that

case, to have submitted to them, had been to have acknowledged an unlawful power.

We will put this parallel case, to be judged by their own principles, that are for the presbyterial government. Suppose there were found one man in a presbytery, that is but an ordinary minister for his station, in a particular congregation (and so he hath a right and lawful calling in the ministry), and (as it is possible there may, and oftentimes it doth fall out to be) suppose that this man hath more abilities for wisdom, holiness, and all other ministerial gifts, than all the rest of that presbytery; suppose such an one as Calvin, who was an ordinary minister of Geneva, and an elder in the presbytery there; if now that presbytery he liveth in, having a right and an ability in themselves, as a presbytery, to judge and determine in all cases that fall within the jurisdiction thereof, should oblige themselves not to proceed to sentence without his advice, in a peculiar manner first asked, they would think it both a lessening of their authority, and a giving of too much authority to that man; much more if this obligation should lie upon other presbyteries, whereof he is not a member. This step (which was the first episcopal authority) the presbyterians would think unlawful to allow unto such a man; and in this point they are so tender, as they will not yield so much as a constant moderatorship, without any other power; and yet that there should be always one moderator in such an assembly is necessary, if there be an order kept up amongst them, as in other bodies. But now for a congregation to advise with a superior presbytery, in a constant way, is not so much as necessary; for where there is no need of advice, it is not necessary. Let this case and the other be paralleled, and see whether there may not be the like said for congregations, they having this right amongst themselves.

The constancy of asking advice upon all cases, though it were pretended to be but advice, yet the act itself, by reason of its constancy, would argue a majority of power and rule, it would turn to such in them (at least in the issue) that already claim it; and so claim it as that some of the presbyterians pretend all the power to be in the classical presbytery, and not in the congregational; and that the congregational elders, in their act of excommunication, are but the deputies of the classical presbyteries, and that they are *præcones*, the proclaimers only of the sentence, but the presbyterians are the judges. That power that is already in one kingdom hath a *jus divinum*, and if set up in another would pretend to it; and when the plurality of men shall be once for it (for the rigidity of that power), it will draw up all the power to itself. And a church's yielding from such liberties and privileges, is by God's usual dispensation the loss of them in the issue; 'To whom we yielded not,' saith the apostle, 'no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you,' Gal. ii. 5.

When the court challenged (about the choice of masters of colleges) this as the privilege of the king, that the party should at least be made known to him, the university stood upon their privileges, that they might choose and admit, without giving notice to the court; knowing that they should soon lose their power if but so much were given up to a greater power over them. Had there been yielding but for a time, it would have endangered, in the issue and consequence, the very continuance of that truth of the gospel, which in that respect was professed by them. *Periculosum est in rebus divinis ut quis suo jure cedat ac potestate* (Cyprian. Epist. ad Jubaian. de heret. Baptiz.). And all those arguments which were brought against bishops, as having a directive power over ministers, will fall in here; for directive power is that, when the exercise of it is at the direction of another.

And farther, consider that what will make the church to be under age, and to be a child for knowledge, and not guided of itself, is unlawful; but always to ask advice, and to be bound so to do, is to bring the church under age, and so to be in bondage (for to be under age and in bondage is all one, as in Gal. iv. 1, 2), to be as well under these tutors as under governors, under tutors whom they must advise withal, and under governors whose authoritative sentence must first be asked.

Reason 4. That which the churches of the primitive times did, having a right and an ability to do it, and was a duty lay upon them to do of themselves, that should congregational churches, having a right to do now, do without having first recourse for advice to presbyteries. And what the apostles, though set over churches, and who were more able to advise than all the presbyteries now are, did not yet require of the churches, but blamed them if they neglected to proceed of themselves, that presbyteries are not now to require of the churches to do, which the apostles did not. But for churches then to advise with the apostles or evangelists, or extraordinary officers, before they proceed to excommunicate, was not then required, but it was their duty to proceed of themselves, according to the power Christ had given them, without waiting for such advice. This is clear in the case of the church of Corinth (whether it were congregational or presbyterial we dispute not now), because that this church had a right to judge that incestuous Corinthian; and the fact was so evident that advice they needed not; 'Do not ye judge,' saith the apostle, 'them that are within?' Doth it not belong to you? He blameth them that they did it not. And as Chrysostom saith, he accuseth them, not that they did not certify him of it. but because they had not mourned or thrown him out. The apostle thus shewing that it ought to have been done without a monitor, because of the evidence of the sin. And when they had neglected to do it, Paul doth not do it himself, but only as an apostle doctrinally declareth such an one to be excommunicated by the church he liveth in. He doth not require that they should come unto him for his sentence before they did it, but he calleth upon them to do it themselves, because they neglected it.

Reason 5. That which is to be supposed needless, that is not to be done in a constant way. To go ask advice when there is no need of advice is needless. The Sanhedrim was God's ordinance in its place, but if the cities should still have come up for advice needlessly, they would not have found a blessing in it. And besides, that which is an acknowledgment of the deficiency of God's ordinance, and God's presence with his own ordinance, that ought not to be done; but such a constant having recourse for advice is acknowledgment of such an insufficiency; for if they do not want it, why should they be bound to ask it?

Reason 6. Let this obligation to advise with another presbytery, and for them to approve, &c., ere that a church (that hath power and ability from Christ) proceed to excommunicate, be but paralleled with the obligation of a particular minister or pastor, for the works of his office, which, by virtue of his office he is enabled by Christ to do singly and alone; the presbytery of a congregation being (as was said) as perfect and as completely enabled for all acts within itself as a particular minister can be supposed alone to be enabled to the works of his office (suppose preaching and the like), God's means being as perfect for government as they are for preaching or baptizing. Now then, as it would be a derogation from the gifts of Christ, and from the office that Christ hath put a man into, and a dishonour to the man that is a minister, constantly to advise afore he performs any act of his calling, and be bound so to do before he preacheth a sermon or the like; the like

derogation would it be to a church, and the presbytery thereof, to be obliged to advise for all their acts of government which they perform. And yet look what ground or occasion there will be for a man that is a preacher to advise with others of his brethren about what he is to preach; the like will be acknowledged, and as far the one as the other in their several proportions, for a congregational church, and the presbytery thereof, to advise with other churches. If a minister should be to preach anything that is of great difficulty, and like to be much gainsaid and contradicted, anything that is of great moment, or new, or uncouth; in that case he may do well to advise afore he preacheth, and have the judgment of his brethren. So if such a case of government cometh, in any kind, that hath a great difficulty in it, wherein they are not clear what they shall do, or they, upon grounds, think that the way they are to proceed is like to be offensive and scandalous to the churches about them when done, in this case they may advise. Occasional advisings, so far as there is a ground for them, we deny not.

Reason 7. That which a classical presbytery is not bound to do to a provincial, nor a provincial to a national assembly, that upon the same grounds a congregation (if it have a sufficient presbytery) is not bound to do to a classical presbytery. What ground can be alleged why a classical presbytery is not bound to advise with a provincial assembly ere it proceeds to excommunication but this, that it is an ordinance sufficient for those acts within itself? If then a congregation be by Christ enabled (he having given sufficiency of power and gifts among them) to do all acts within itself, why should this church (which the promise of Christ's presence to be among them is first made to), which is the seat both of worship and government, be deprived of its privilege when the others are not. Where Jesus Christ hath given power, he hath given gifts.

Reason 8. What is it they should advise thus constantly for, and about what should they depend upon the sentence of a classical presbytery? First, it is not out of want of skill, for that must be either of the *jus*, that is, that they are unskilful to know the rule for what sins men should be excommunicated. Now in the constant cases that fall out in congregations for which men should be excommunicated, the rule is known well enough, that excommunication is for such and such gross sins as the Scripture holds forth, and as are scandalous to all Christians; and if any new cases fall out, let them advise. And we acknowledge that synods may be of use to find out those rules, and to hold them forth; but when once they are held forth and known, and commonly received, there needs no advice to know the matter of right for which men are to be excommunicated. Or else it must be want of skill of judging the matter of fact done; and for that they need not advise, for it is to be proved by witnesses. A company of elders and a congregation may as well be able to judge of that as all the assemblies in the world, and may be thought as sufficient and as faithful to judge, whether the fact be fully proved and cleared by witnesses or no. Or is it want of skill in that judging what obstinacy and impenitency is? As for that (as I said before) they are entrusted to judge of it, for if they will receive him upon his repentance without bringing him to the classis, they may; neither are they to bring him thither till he is obstinate. Secondly, It is not to have authority from the sentence of that synod that advice is necessary, for that authority must either be an autnority of reverence only, or a further power political. There needs not a further political power to be judged by their sentence, for if a congregation and the presbytery thereof should proceed to excommunication the party was as truly excommunicated, and with as full a power from Christ as if all the synods in the world had ratified it; and therefore to add autho-

rity as defective in the congregation, to that end their sentence is needless. And then when a man is to be excommunicated, he is to be excommunicated by them; when it is done, it is done by them; and if a classis addeth not authority, it should not take away this authority by obliging men to advise, and to have their sentence first. If of reverence only, then it should be giving a respectful deference to their judgments, which in some cases is allowable.

Reason 9. Those admonitions which the classical presbytery are to give to the person that is brought before them by the elders of his congregation (they having themselves admonished him, and he remained obstinate under their admonitions), are either an instituted ordinance of Christ preparatory to excommunication, to be further applied to him over and above those given him by his own congregation, or they are to work in a way of moral persuasion, and by the way of reverence that the person hath of the classical presbytery more than of his own congregation; that is, they either work politically as an institution of Christ upon him, or only morally; for what is it by which this man's conscience must be wrought upon in these superadded admonitions of the classical presbytery, having been obstinate under those of his own? It must either be *vi materiæ*, by reason of the matter, and that they have a great reverence in the man's conscience, or it must be by their being invested with an authority from Christ. And if these admonitions of the classical presbytery be as an institution preparatory, they are to be reckoned ordinances of the same rank and kind with those which the elders of his own church hath given him; which admonitions are not as if a company of saints or ministers should meet him occasionally, and admonish him (for he may have a thousand such admonitions, and yet his sin not be accounted ripe for excommunication), but his sin is then ripe for excommunication when admonitions ministerially administered by such as Christ hath appointed have been administered to him, and he continues obstinate. So that admonitions either may be said to have a persuasive power only, or else a ministerial power by way of institution, and so work on a man by the blessing of God upon them, and by virtue of the promise; and in the want of either of them a man cannot be judged fit to be excommunicated, because that Christ's means appointed by him have not been applied to him. So then every admonition in this way of ordinance is in order unto excommunication, if the person continues obstinate.

Now then, first, if it be such a necessary ordinance to be administered by the classical presbytery afore such a time as the party can be excommunicated, then, 1, the congregational eldership, and the admonitions thereof, is not a perfect ordinance; and, 2, it were not only a sin for any congregational church to excommunicate a man without bringing of him first to the classical presbytery, but the man also is not capable till then of being excommunicated by his own church, for it may be said there wants an ordinance to be applied to him before he is to be excommunicated, for all such admonitions that are a special ordinance of Christ as being preparatory to excommunication, and in order thereunto, are not to be omitted. And let it be shown that Christ hath divided by his institution that some admonitions should be in a man's own congregation by his own eldership, and others afterward to be by a classical presbytery, before he is to be excommunicated by his own church. And also, 3, if it were thus, then a congregational presbytery hath not sufficient power to excommunicate a man, for if he is by virtue of an institution to be admonished also by a classical presbytery, this presbytery must by institution have power also to give sentence, without which the sentence of the congregation were not sufficient; for that church which hath power to admonish

publicly in order to excommunication must necessarily have the power also to join in the excommunication, or else the excommunication is not valid.

But secondly, if they be admonitions only in a persuasive way to a man that is obstinate, to work upon him as and with a reverence of the persons admonishing, and to that end he is brought to the classical presbytery to be admonished, consider what will follow from it. 1. That those ministers should rather be called out, which he in a peculiar manner most reverenceth, they being the fittest persons to give admonitions, as John Baptist was to admonish Herod, because Herod reverenced him (as the text saith); and therefore to make an admonition court of a certain sort of persons whom perhaps the man knows not, this is to extend it beyond what the ground of a reverence will always reach unto. And by this reason likewise there might be some one man of eminent gifts set up to admonish, which should move a greater reverence in the hearts of men more than half a dozen presbyteries. 2. If he be brought only upon this ground to be thus admonished by them, then a mere moral ordinance of less force is preferred to a standing instituted ordinance, that, according to Christ's institution, is of a greater. A moral power is preferred to a political that is given by Christ, whereas on the other side, the means that a man's own congregation hath used being instituted means, the blessing of Christ depends upon it.

It is true we grant that if a company of saints or a company of ministers occasionally meet him, they might admonish him, and God may bless it; but when those means that Christ hath appointed hath passed upon him, and he is not wrought upon by them, then for us to set up any other court of a company of men to bring him unto, which, by Christ's appointment, hath a power of a lesser kind (as if it is but a moral reverential power, it is no more), this is but a secondary and remote power in comparison of the former. It is but persuasive, it is not ministerial, and persuasive admonitions were applied to him afore, and he was past them; he was admonished by the brother in private, he was admonished by two or three more, which that brother took to join with him, and therefore in a congregation Christ brings him to an authoritative means which himself hath in a public manner instituted, and to bring him then from these means unto persuasive means again; this must needs fall short, and be blasted to this man's conscience, when the means that Christ hath in a special manner instituted had taken no place upon him, and this would also make Jesus Christ to proceed from the greater to the lesser. Unless it be affirmed by those who hold that the congregations have a sufficient presbytery for excommunication, yet Christ's appointment is, that classical presbyteries must always join with them, without which they are imperfect, which is indeed but a supposition. Thus there is the show of an ordinance set up to the prejudice of the ordinance of Christ, whereas there should not be set up an image to resemble any appointment of Christ; and if anything put into the road of an ordinance be in the stead of an ordinance, or preferred to an ordinance, it will grow flat, though of itself it be good, and upon occasion may be useful, as we acknowledge the admonitions of a classical presbytery may be, but not in this case. We acknowledge that such an admonition God may bless, as he may bless good conference; but if any would set up good conference as a more efficacious ordinance than preaching, when preaching is the special ordinance, there would not be found that blessing in it.

If it be said, But may not all good means be used to reclaim a man that is obstinate, before he be proceeded against by excommunication? and is it not good means to be admonished by a company of men grave and holy?

and is not this better than to be admonished only by those of a man's own congregation ?

I *answer*, 1. That the goodness of all means lies in the blessing and appointment of Christ; and if he have appointed means sufficient, as the admonitions of the eldership of a particular congregation is, then in a constant and set way, to have an admonition court to bring men unto, further to be admonished, hath not a warrant for it. If the congregational presbytery be a sufficient presbytery, then they are a sufficient means ; and cursed is he that addeth as well as he that takes from Christ's institution, he that will use more than Christ hath appointed as well as he that will use less. In this case we may say, ' If they will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one come from the dead,' because God had appointed Moses and the prophets to be a sufficient means. And thus in physic also, to use more than is prescribed, is as dangerous as to use less. And further, if he is to be accounted obstinate, after the admonition of his own congregation, so as to be excommunicated (as if they be a sufficient means, he is to be so accounted), then as God cutteth men off when their sins are ripe, so the church also doth.

Ans. 2. If all good means were to be set up as instituted ordinances, then this man should be brought to be admonished by the provincial assembly before he is excommunicated, yea, and before the national too. If you will set the bounds in a classical presbytery, why had you not as good set them in a congregational (if a congregational be sufficient), where Christ hath set it? For you may suppose still that if he had the provincial assembly's admonition (men of great authority and reverence), it might prevent his excommunication. And besides, if he may after his excommunication appeal to them, why should he not be brought unto them before ?

Reason 10. Add to this, that until the delinquent hath been admonished before all the people of the congregation, he hath not had all the means applied unto him in his own congregation which Christ hath appointed to work repentance in him; for the whole church is not told of it as Christ would have it, neither is he rebuked before all, so that all may mourn and lament over him to break his heart. And surely it is the right of every congregation, and of every member in it, to have all means used that are sufficient within that congregation, afore its members are brought before strangers. Now if they are to be admonished by the classical presbytery, after that they have been thus admonished twice or thrice publicly in the congregation, then in that respect also there is a proceeding from a greater and more sufficient means unto a less sufficient. For the admonition of the classical presbytery, though given by public persons, yet it is given privately; whereas the means, according to Christ's order, is to go from more private to more public, as a way of doing the person good. And the shame is more public afore the congregation than afore the consistory; and therefore, according to the presbyterial practices, they are admonished first by the classical presbytery, and when they are found obstinate, there they have two or three admonitions publicly before the people afore he is excommunicated; which admonitions, if they are in order to repentance, then they are more efficacious than what hath been done in the consistory of elders, and therefore used last; and if more efficacious, why (according to the right of a congregation, and according to the sufficiency of means in a congregation) were they not used first, so as the person need not be brought in order to his repentance before the classical presbytery, because a more sufficient means hath already been used? So that, in a word, they are carried unto the presbytery, either afore or after they are admonished publicly in the con-

gregation; if afore, all good means have not been used in the congregation; if after, you go from a more efficacious means unto a less efficacious, even in that respect fore-mentioned also.

Reason 11. When the apostle saith, Titus iii. 10, 'after one or two admonitions, him that is an heretic reject,' as condemned of himself, as much by those means as by a thousand, the admonitions he intendeth there are those that are public, and given by them that have the power of excommunicating. If he be admonished afore his own congregation, and the elders thereof, these are either such admonitions the apostle there intendeth or not; if they be, he is to be rejected without being admonished by any other; for the apostle's rule plainly evidenceth that there is but one kind of public power by which the admonitions should be applied; and therefore, if the classical presbytery were that power which should reject and excommunicate this man upon their two or three admonitions, then he is not to be brought down, to have admonitions again, afore the people in his own congregation, but he is to be rejected without any further proceeding; so that if he be brought to the classical presbytery, after he hath been admonished before the whole congregation, the apostle's rule is not observed; or if he be brought to the congregation after he hath been with those that have the public power to admonish and cast him out, the apostle's rule is not observed neither. And thus, whereas God hath built one or two altars, this would be to build seven.

Reason 12. That practice which will breed distractions, and more inconveniences, ought not to be. But for a congregation that is supposed to have sufficient power in itself to depend upon the classical presbytery for a sentence first passed, will breed greater inconveniences than for them to proceed without them. For the first, if the congregational eldership be of one mind that a man ought to be excommunicated, and the classical presbytery is of another, the congregational eldership having sufficient power, and the conscience of duty lying upon them, they are to proceed notwithstanding; and so by rejecting the advice aforehand of the classical presbytery, they are brought to cast a greater contempt upon it than if they had proceeded without their sentence, and so as to give them an account. And as for the party, if he will refuse to go afore the classical presbytery (his conscience judging, and that upon right grounds, that the congregation hath sufficient power to proceed against him), what rules in Scripture will compel him to go to be admonished afore them? If he goes by an appeal, that is after sentence, and then the congregation and he are parties; if he goes as complained of by the congregation, by what rule can they constrain him to it?

CHAPTER VIII.

Some objections answered.

Obj. 1. That excommunication is a matter of so great weight, to give a man up unto Satan, to throw him out of the communion of saints, as that for the weight and greatness of the sentence it should be advised upon by a further eldership, by a greater company than those of a man's own congregation.

Ans. 1. You greaten the ordinance of excommunication as the papists did that of the Lord's supper, preferring it before preaching, and so magnified the clergy and the priests that consecrated the sacrament, and also drew the people to the worshipping of the bread. Thus you also advance an undue

power of the clergy, combined in an association of particular congregations, and to take their power away under pretence of the greatness of the ordinance committed to them.

Ans. 2. And yet it is not so great and dreadful a sentence, according to your own opinion, making it only to be a cutting off of a church, and not to import a formal delivering up unto Satan. And,

Ans. 3. If the congregation and the eldership thereof be sufficient for power, and skill, and faithfulness, why, for the greatness of the sentence, should there be a going out to other churches, when Christ hath proportioned his means to his end? And what is there in the excommunication of a brother that these may not be supposed to be sufficient for, and to be betrusted with? They are betrusted to preach the word; every particular person is (whether it prove error or truth) till he do miscarry. They are betrusted to admit members, to suspend from the sacrament; why not to excommunicate? Yea, the sentence and the proof itself depends upon two or three witnesses by God's appointment, and they cast it; and this though the matter were brought before all the judges in the world; then why not when the matter is brought afore two or three officers, faithful men, and a congregation of saints? Why should not they be esteemed as faithful judges as others? If you commit to a jury and one judge, a recorder or a lawyer, in an incorporate town, though decayed, the power of life and death, and cutting a man off from this life, which, when it is done, cannot be remedied again; then why should you not betrust the power of cutting a man off from the church, if it be, unto the congregation, as being in this case the judges and jury; especially, whenas there may be a remedy? For he is not so cut off but he may be restored.

Ans. 4. Wherein should the greatness of excommunication lie but in the matter for which a man is excommunicated? We profess it is not for niceties, but for sins against light, against the common principles of nature and Christianity; as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. v. 3, 'He that hath so done this deed.' There must be a *scelus* in it, that if he goes on in it will damn his soul; and therefore the apostle calls that Corinthian 'that wicked person,' ver. 13. And for these things, the congregation is as well able to judge as all the elders in the world. In the matter of fact (as was said afore), a jury of twelve men do judge of the fact when a man's life is concerned, and by a parity of reason, a congregation may judge of the matter of fact for which a man is to be thrown out of the church.

Obj. 2. But excommunication is *res communis*, a common concern, which other neighbour churches have an interest in, and in that respect they are to have a joint concurrence in it aforehand.

Ans. 1. So it is likewise to all the churches in the world, more especially in the nation, and the party may remove to any other part of the kingdom; and so then all the kingdom should have a concurrence in the act aforehand as well, and then the whole nation should be called.

Ans. 2. If the common interest of churches should carry it, then it would follow that because he is excommunicated out of all the churches of that presbytery, all the churches should be present at his excommunication, as well as that particular church he is a member of.

Ans. 3. If neighbourhood and common interest be insisted on, then the churches of the next presbytery (whereof many may be nearer to that congregation to which he is joined than this classical presbytery) should be present also; for the man may go thither to be received, and therefore it is fit that they should have an interest aforehand too. There is no reason to be given why it should be *res communis*, a common affair, to that classical

presbytery more than to other neighbour churches; as to the thing itself, it can only be said they have associated voluntarily; but then the ground of that association must be considered.

Ans. 4. When a man is cast out of one church, he is cast out of all churches; but not formally, but only consequently, and by virtue of communion of churches, this common law being among them, that no other church should receive him till he have given satisfaction to his own; and therefore, answerably, it is not an antecedent cognisance afore by other churches that is necessary, but only a consequent, as was the manner of the primitive times, to send to churches after, and to tell them, from such an one let us abstain, this being the law among churches, that if a man be cast out of one church, he is cast out of all. Either all churches must be called, one as well as another, or else some particular church must be betrusted, and betrusted by Christ; and if so, why not his own congregation, having a sufficient eldership for excommunication?

Ans. 5. In admission (as was urged afore), every particular church is betrusted to admit members, and, by virtue of the admission of members into it, they are admitted to have communion in all churches, and therefore why should it not be entrusted for excommunication also? It is no obstacle that it is *res communis*, a common business, for the other is equally such to all other churches. We ask also if that suspension be not *res communis*, a common concern also, insomuch that until such time as he is excommunicated, all churches are to suspend him from the sacrament after his own church hath suspended him? And if so, upon that ground, why should not all churches be acquainted with his suspension aforehand?

Ans. 6. The fifth canon of the council of Nice* tells us that synods were therefore appointed amongst other ends, that all the churches might know who had been excommunicated by a particular bishop (as the manner was then), that all the rest might account him so until he had given satisfaction. They were not therefore to be called aforehand, afore he was excommunicated, on the pretence of a common interest.

Obj. 3. But in the multitude of counsellors there is strength.

Ans. 1. Let them have the use of counsellors only, and we deny it not. A man will not go for counsel unless there be need, and in cases of need, we do acknowledge it.

Ans. 2. That rule is the rule of nature; but we have a rule for the sufficiency of the eldership of a congregation, with an institution, and with a promise of Christ's presence, 'where two or three are gathered together.' If this were founded upon mere nature, then we would yield, that this axiom might have place, and they might still take in more counsellors to them. But a rule of nature will not set up an ordinance, though it may help to manage it, and it should not be set to weaken it, and disparage it, as this doth. Let us rest in God's ordinance, and rest in God's number, what he hath thought sufficient; and the conscience will rather be quieted, and wrought upon by subjection to an ordinance, than to a multitude. The promise is not to a company of more persons, as such, but the promise is made to the relation, to the constitution, and the blessing depends upon the promise; and to this purpose, God will be with two or three as well as with three thousand in an ordinary way. The laws of England sets not up a multitude of counsellors, that is, of lawyers, for the judging of life and death, but it sets up a few judges, who sometimes alone, sometimes two or three together, do judge all causes, when yet there are multitudes of lawyers, and as good lawyers as they, and as able to counsel. If we all do rest satis-

* In tom. ii., Collect. Concil. Labbei, page 46.

fied in this law as the ordinance of the kingdom, why should we not rest in the other as the ordinance of Christ?

Ans. 3. If this alleged rule held, then classical presbyteries should go to greater synods, for there is a multitude of more counsellors. And then all the churches should continually have had recourse to the apostles, while they were alive, in all such acts of discipline; for any apostle might have said, Am not I wiser? send them unto me; yea, cannot I more effectually persuade? Therefore both take my advice, and come to me for my sentence; bring them afore me to be admonished. The apostles, indeed, when they were present in churches, did join with the elders and officers of the churches in their acts of government; but they did not require, if absent, that the churches should come to advise with them.

Obj. 4. But may not this be done for peace' sake, whenas this will compound all, and accommodate the differences amongst us?

Ans. 1. It is in the case of peace as in the case of scandal. If a brother be offended, and the thing be indifferent, and in my liberty, then indeed I may forbear, and I ought to forbear, because of an offence; but I am not to forbear if it be a duty which he is offended at, neither am I to give away a liberty. So for peace men may forbear things that are indifferent to them, and so they ought to do; yea, they may conceal their own judgments, and forbear to practise some things which otherwise they might do. As the apostle says, Rom. xiv. 22, 'Hast thou faith? have it to thyself.' But a man is to do nothing positive that shall acknowledge a seeming power, and bring congregations into bondage, when Christ hath set them free; for peace must be so kept in churches, as that withal their privileges must be kept. There is no yielding from that right which Christ hath given. The case of peace holdeth not in the acknowledgment of a false power, for that will breed destruction.

Ans. 2. It is the keeping of the true bounds of power, as Christ hath seated them, that will preserve the peace of churches; but to yield unto a false power will always be occasion of quarrels.

Obj. 5. But because that these churches may be perhaps offended with what you do, and with that sentence you shall give, and so be engaged to question you for that act after you have done it, is it not therefore better to advise aforehand, and so to prevent that offence?

Ans. 1. It was the preventing offences, and the avoiding of schisms, that did set up episcopal power, as Jerome saith; for because a multitude of presbyters could not agree in their presbyteries, they devolved it into one man; but the remedy was worse than the disease, for it degenerated into tyranny.

Ans. 2. Simply to prevent an offence, the liberty of churches, nor the rights that is in churches, is not to be taken away. An actual offence arising is a ground indeed for the neighbouring churches to call upon that church to give them satisfaction; and there doth hereupon a duty lie upon this church, if it have miscarried, to give them satisfaction. But then they must be actually offended.

Ans. 3. The ground why they would have us advise with the classical presbytery is not merely to prevent offences, but it is because they claim an authority.

Ans. 4. The case must be supposed so to fall out, that either the classical presbytery will be of the same mind with the congregational, or not. If it be supposed that they shall be of the same mind, then there needs not to be advice to prevent offence; and this will ordinarily be the case when the rules

for excommunication are fixed, and by some common agreement concluded upon, between churches. Or if it be supposed they may not agree, in that case the congregational presbytery is put into a greater strait, and will run into an higher contempt and offence of the presbytery classical, when they shall think themselves bound to excommunicate the man, against the advice and sentence of the classical presbytery given them.

Ans. 5. There is no inferior court which hath a power and ability to judge, that upon a supposition of miscarriage, and of offending of an higher court, hath an obligation laid upon it, upon all occasions, therefore to advise with that higher court, to prevent these appeals and these offences.

Ans. 6. If, for avoiding of offences, there should be such advising always afore sentence with other or more or greater churches, then the classical churches should never give sentence; for they may incur the offence of the provincial, and this latter likewise of the national. And therefore supposing that these courts were one above another, and that the inferior had a full right and power to finish the sentence of excommunication, it were much better to leave it to the cognisance of the higher courts, by way of appeals, than under the presupposition and pretence that offences may arise to weaken the right of the particular congregation, by an obligation to advise and to have the sentence of the higher court antecedent.

BOOK IV.

The claims of the Presbyterian government considered and refuted.—That the church universal is not a church political, and the seat of government.—That the institution for worship and government falleth not upon the saints in a nation, as a nation or kingdom, to be the seat of it.—That an argument cannot be urged for a national church government, from the instance of the Jewish pattern.—That a standing presbytery is not to be set up to exercise power and jurisdiction over particular congregations.

CHAPTER I.

That the church universal is not a church political, and the seat of instituted government.

I shall now examine the validity of the presbyterian claims for their government; and, first, I shall prove that the church universal is not, in the whole, and in all the subordinate parts of it, a church political, and the seat of instituted government. The church catholic is not a formed politic body, which Christ hath made the seat of this power. That it indeed affordeth fit materials, both of saints and men gifted, we grant; even as men are by nature, having variety of several parts, and variety of gifts, fitted to the bodies politic; and if you take all mankind, there is among them variety of gifts and dispositions fitted to make up commonwealths; yet all mankind taken together are not a politic body, but as they are formed up into commonwealths or kingdoms; and men, having thus several gifts, are put into several offices and places in those several kingdoms and commonwealth, which are ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις, a human creature, as the apostle calls it. Even so it is here.

We yield also that take the church universal in its parts, and so the keys are given to the whole partitive, as divided into several bodies, in whom God hath set teachers and pastors, &c. As we say he hath set in a kingdom constables and justices of the peace, &c., but yet every constable is not a constable of the whole kingdom; so he hath set in his church apostles, &c., who were as the nobles, and were ministers, and had power in all churches, yet exercised their power *per partes*, as they came to this church and that church; but he hath set other ordinary officers, as other justices of peace, in their several less jurisdictions, or as mayor and recorders in incorporate towns.

We yield also that all these churches, by virtue of their catholic relation, are knit together again in a common communion, which they owe one unto another by several bands and ties, so as they have communion one with another, and that as churches too, and with their elders as elders; but the present question is of the keys of jurisdiction.

1. These keys cannot be given to the whole universal church; for, first, they do not, nor indeed can, assemble.

2. The whole universal church hath not all the keys; for it is not capable

of preaching, nor is it capable of receiving the sacraments altogether. And suppose there were a general council of all the ministers of the world, and they should receive the sacrament, they should not receive it as ministers, but they should receive it only as believers.

That the church catholic on earth neither is nor can be the seat of this public worship, nor of this government, as appears by those arguments.

1. It can no more be so than all mankind can make a commonwealth.

2. This is reserved to heaven, which is the only general assembly where the worship of God is perfected, to which all other particular assemblies, the family on earth, come, Heb. xii. 23.

3. If this power of governing be given to the church universal, then either to a meeting of elders, or of all the faithful. Not of all the faithful, for they cannot meet as in congregations they do, nor is there any institution for all the males to meet, as in Jerusalem, nor for all the people, male and female, as once every seventh year there, so these in some one place in the world. Neither is this power of government given to any meeting of elders, as elders to the church universal, for then, either it must be that God hath appointed a set company, as in the Sanhedrim, whose office peculiarly it is to be these catholic elders, set apart for that work, as those who were elders of the people; such in a manner were the apostles; and if so, let the ordinary institution for this be shewn, such as theirs was for that, Deut. vii. 17. This, indeed, is the popish principle, that all bishops are by office catholic bishops, and may all, by their office, attend a general council. And thus, as in Jewry, God might have made two great ordinances for the government of his church only: an universal Sanhedrim for the church catholic, such as the parliamentary power is in this kingdom, and the other in that of villages and cities, there being none intermediate or subordinate between them. But if it were so, then all intermediate synods should be taken away, and only a general council be that to which all congregations should appeal. And that the institution was not so, is evident by this, that all our divines do acknowledge that general councils are but *ad bene esse*, and not absolutely necessary, which they would be if the primary institution fell upon them, and therefore for the first three hundred years there was none. But if the meaning be, that each elder is an elder of the church universal, and that the church universal is a politic body throughout from top to bottom, the greater part still ruling the lesser, and the universal ruling the whole, so as by virtue of their relation to the whole, they act in any part, or may act in the whole (which is according to the principles that the assembly goes upon in their answer to our reasons), then the institution of the politic power is made to fall first and primarily on the church universal, for in their first *præcognitum* they say the whole church is one, made up of the collection of all, and that hence there is a dependency of all the lesser as parts upon the whole. But,

4. If the institution falls upon the church universal, then the church universal is a politic body; and if so, then as this whole church should be but one politic body, so each elder should be an elder to this whole church for all ends and purposes of an elder, both for worship and government, for elder and church are relative: as when the apostle saith, 'Ordain the elders to every church,' assuredly they had the relation of elders to that church both for worship and government. Now, this will set up an unparalleled monster in government, the like to which mankind never knew, and therefore cannot be the institution of Christ, for Christ's government is orderly. Now the monstrousness of this will appear. 1. This will make an external politic government to be managed by men (by Christ the head, we grant it is now managed), that is greater than any of the monarchies, which, through their vastness,

were hurtful to mankind whom they ruled. For the church universal on earth is now, and hath been ever since the apostles' time, in most nations, as Mr Brerewood proves. There are the Ethiopic and Arabian Christians in Africa; the Grecians under the Turk; the Armenians under the Persian; the Indian Christians of St Thomas, so called because he was the converter of Christians there; then there are all which are in Europe. And that many of these churches are, in a great measure, pure in their doctrine, or at least have enough to save men, and so cannot be excluded out of the list of the church catholic, appeareth by that confession of faith made by patriarch Cyril in the name of the Grecian churches. Now, to have so vast a body to be in the whole the seat of government, especially if you add to it, when the fulness of the Jews and Gentiles shall come in, and the north and the south shall give themselves to Christ, how can this be practicable? And if not so, how can it be the institution? It is true, that Christ's internal kingdom is thus large, and managed by himself, both in whole and in part, and by his Spirit; but that his external kingdom should be such, is inconceivable.

2. That which increaseth the wonder is, that all these should be governed by a general aristocracy, whereas that it should be governed by one man would be more feasible. But then,

3. It makes it more strange that this should further be the law of it, that every elder of every congregation should be the elder of these churches, yea, of the whole church for all acts of government, and that he should be bound up in his constant function and exercise to the compass of one congregation, and yet have, by a fundamental institution, a right of eldership in power in all the churches of the world besides. See but how absurd such a government will be in the like civil society that were so vast a body; suppose that in all these countries mentioned, or all over the world, the forms of government that now are should be pulled down and should begin anew, and that the government should be that the burgomasters or aldermen, yea, constables of every little town or village, chosen by the people, should be an alderman to all ends and purposes, in all towns imperial, incorporate, yea, in villages, to hang and draw as occasion is throughout the world, and to have as much right as any therein; and by virtue of the law this duty should lie on him to stir up others, and join with others, if there be anything amiss, to assume the authority to execute this. We read, indeed, that in the Roman monarchy, it was the privilege of private persons, that he who was free of one city, Rome, was free of all the world for trading, &c., but that he should have power of office in all cities was never heard of. This is a thing that never fell out, no, not in Israel. There were, indeed, general elders on purpose appointed over all the nation, but they were not elders over every city. It is nowhere found but in Turkey; it is not to be paralleled but in that government which the Janissaries have; and among the Jesuits, it is the law of their society, but it is formidable to princes, as was that of the Templars.

4. It is strange that Christ should appoint such a government, and leave it loosely for the persons if they be called, as that is the limitation with which our brethren would mollify it, to act in this or that part of the universal church, and never so much as set down any of these things. In so great a body and latitude of power, there had needed to have been the most sure and certain order distinctly appointed by Christ. For let it be considered how many things were to be ordered: as whether there should be but one general council to which all controversies should be brought, as in Israel the Sanhedrim was, and whether it should be of a constant standing, or be chosen anew every year; whether in it there should be more of ruling or teaching elders, or an equal number of both; whether there should be many subordina-

tions of sorts of elders, and how many of them, and by what rules and limits set out, and what number of each elders should be therein; and who should choose them which are to be sent, whether every individual elder meeting, as in provincial assemblies they did, or whether a few chosen should choose the others. It is a wonder that Christ hath set down none of these things, that he neither appointed one general court, to which all appeals should be brought, nor, if there were to be subordinate synods, hath assigned how many they should be, nor so much as declared that there should be any such subordination. And if the general law of this supposed government is, that every greater number should rule the less, this would be an exceeding loose and confused foundation of a settled government, and a settled government Christ must be supposed to have left. In this case, therefore, surely there should of necessity be the most positive law to determine what that call is whereby such should execute it, as well as to lay down a law for the right, or else every one of them would challenge it, for every man will say he hath as good a right as another, nay, greater.

5. This right would both give all a pretence to it, as also lay it upon them. For as it is their duty, as it was Paul's, to take care of all the churches, so they have a call already by their fundamental relation. And then, if elders chosen by the churches should determine one way, yet the rest having a fundamental right, being catholic elders by institution, might determine the other way, for the obligation is by virtue of their being elders of this catholic church.

6. Christ never gave an institution which was never brought forth into act; but such is this pretended institution of a catholic church to be the seat of government.

(1.) Because that church can never meet; and as *frustra est potentia, sic etiam potestas, quæ non reducitur in actum, i.e.* not only natural power, but authority too, is in vain, which cannot be brought into the condition of acting. Christ did not set up a doctrinal principle for government and policy in the speculation, but such an one as is practical. And our presbyterian brethren make use of the notion, yet reject the thing; for they would be unwilling that a general council of all Christians interested should be the major part, determining all the parts of government and doctrine, and bind up all churches thereunto. Surely Jesus Christ suited his government of his church to all times, and there have been few times in the world in which this could be done, no, not by general councils. Divisions have and will hinder it, persecutions, or distance of place, or want of consent, who shall call them, will hinder it.

(2.) It cannot be that the primary institution should fall upon it, for then the institution should fall upon the representative church first, rather than on the church both of the faithful and of the elders too. But the institution must rather be where both are, for they have more of the reality of a church.

(3.) God giveth gifts and abilities suitable to all his institutions. When God did call apostles to an universal eldership, he gave them gifts suitable. Now there are few, we may say none, of elders that are fit to be elders catholic, that are fit to act in the church universal; and yet, every one in their place, every ruling elder, by this principle, must be supposed to be fit if called; for the institution and their office (according to this principle) doth give them the *jus*, the right, and the ability; whereas the choice by others gives only the exercise; but the right, if founded upon an institution, supposeth a fitness or an ability in all. That every bishop (who pretended to have an higher degree of office than ordinary elders, by divine institution) should be a catholic bishop (for by the ancient canon law all bishops in the

world might be of a general council, by virtue of their place), is far more supposable. For as by their principles they were of an higher function, so a supposition might be made of a proportionably higher eminency of parts and gifts to be in them above other men, as in some few in the church there eminently is, as well as there is a vast difference of natural gifts among the sons of men. Thus, as bishops were supposed to be men of an higher degree, so, like Saul, they might be supposed taller than their fellows. But to make all elders, yea, ruling elders (for they must come in too if they be likewise by institution), and all ministers, catholic elders, and fit for general councils, is to assert that Christ hath also given to them all gifts and abilities suitable to so great a function and charge.

(4.) God never called men to do work in any part which they are not capable of, as these catholic elders are not; for they ought to have variety of languages, as God gave the apostles. For if appeals may be made, they are to hear every man in his own language speak for himself. When God did make catholic elders, catholic rulers, he gave them languages. You argue more congregations than one, from variety of languages in Jerusalem, or else they could not perform their duties to each. We may do the like against this catholic eldership here. If it had been only asserted that every man is an elder of a church in the same nation, then indeed such elders might, in respect of language, have been fit for their office; but if you extend their office to all the world, then it is impossible for them to discharge it when they are called to exercise it in any part of it; since they have not all languages, and so are not capable of a call to exercise their whole function (as our brethren say their right and office is) in every part, or in the whole. But now, when God made officers of all churches, he gave gifts accordingly, tongues, and languages, as to the apostles. Now we believe that most ruling elders have but one language; yea, and if Latin were the general language, they were not fit to be catholic elders.

(5.) By the law of this rule, if the apostles should have met in a general council, other elders being also in that general council, catholic elders; and being there, by virtue of being catholic elders, they must needs have been, in that respect, equal with the apostles. For in that place, and in that sphere, what could the apostles challenge more of authority amongst them, since to be a catholic elder was the highest authority of an apostle?

(6.) This principle is contradictory to other principles of our presbyterian brethren; for whereas to rear up their subordination of assemblies they invented a representative relation, personating many churches, and also other superior assemblies, such as national and general councils, this new taken up principle, of every elder's being an elder of the universal church, destroys it, or makes it needless. It takes away all such representations; for every person chosen to be of them was already a member really, and not representatively of the whole, and hath a full right of eldership of the whole church, according to this their notion; and the special call any one hath is but *designatio personæ*, a designation of the person, who shall serve at such a time; but in that council, when met, he representeth the whole church, as much as any particular church, when he meeteth there. And to make him an elder representing any particular church, is to give him a lower title than he had, for he is an elder of the universal. And his call only gives the *exercitium;* the other gives the *jus*, which is more than the *exercitium*, for it is the root of it.

(7.) It would make Bellarmine's argument good, that the greater company of elders simply would have the greater authority; for, it lying not in representation, but in being elders of the catholic church, they must (though out

of a council) needs carry it, if more of them will agree to meet in a body at any time,

(8.) If every elder were thus an elder of a church universal, then the church universal should call him to his office; but the church universal doth not call him, but only particular churches; for church and elder are relatives, and the call is that which makes the relation. And Jesus Christ calleth either mediately or immediately. Immediately, he indeed did call apostles to be officers of the church universal, but then himself did it, and gave gifts accordingly fit for it. When he calleth mediately, there is a proportion between the means by which he calleth and the thing whereto a man is called; and therefore the proportion must lie in this, if he be a member of the church universal, the church universal must be the means of his call; and if he be called by a particular church, then his office reacheth no further. We have an express institution that elders were set over their particular flocks by the Holy Ghost, Acts xx.; and when the apostles themselves, who were general officers of all churches, did ordain any elder, it was but κατὰ πολιν, and κατ' ἐκκλησίαν; so that, although the callers had an universal power, which no synod in the world hath the like, yet the office of the called was limited, according to the seat and church to which he was called. And if the apostle did not make general elders who yet had an universal power, then surely a particular church cannot make a general elder; that exceeds its proportion; he is thereby limited both by the extent of the power of the callers, and the limits of the seat to which he is called. And indeed the nature of an office in the church is a separation of him for a constant work; it is not to do here and there an act of office as a journeyman, but to have a constant employment; which office, therefore, is limited to a certain church, which church also calleth him to a certain employment there. And if it be said that a corporation hath power to call a man to be a member of the parliament for the whole kingdom, yet there is a double difference in this. The law saith not, that every burgess is a parliament man, and a burgess of the kingdom; which is that you would make to be the law here. And then, in the second place, the whole *terminus* and object of his call is to be a burgess in that case of the whole kingdom only while the parliament sits; and the relation ceaseth when the use and exercise ceaseth.

And if it be said that every member is a member of the church universal, and therefore every elder is an elder of the church universal, the case is not the same, for the one is a mere communion by way of privilege, the other is by way of jurisdiction; and there is a great deal of difference between a man's being free to trade in all places and in all countries, and to have the power of a senator, or a constable, or a nobleman, in all countries wherever he comes. And sure our brethren will not hold themselves to the parallel thereof; for, 1, though a member of any other church hath the privilege to receive the sacrament, or have his child baptized, yet they would not allow him a capacity of being called (when he comes occasionally among them) to choose an officer with them, or exercise such a privilege over them or with them. 2, If the proportion of elder and members be observed, then by this rule, as any member of another church may, without any further special call than barely a testimony that he is a member of another church, challenge communion with any church (without any precedaneous active call of the church intervening), so by the same rule of proportion, if every elder were an elder of the church universal, you need not say, if he be called by another church, he may do thus or thus; but if it be made out by testimony that he is an elder of another church, he may challenge the privilege of an elder, as the other may of a member. 3. As for the communion of members in other churches, there

needs not any special association of churches into a presbytery, neither hath a member a further right or call to receive in a church within his association than in any other church in the world. By like reason associations should be as needless for these universal elders to exercise government in; and if the proportion holds, then, as the elder or elders of one association is excluded from coming to intermeddle in a neighbour association, so members of another association should be from communion in those churches which are not associated with it.

(9.) That which is the principle and foundation of popery, and which, if it prevailed, and all the churches challenge the right of it, would hinder further reformation and growth in the truth, and would make all the reformed churches schismatics, and would justify non-residency, and introduce a foreign ecclesiastical government in all states and kingdoms, that cannot be Christ's government. But such is this catholic political church.

1. As for popery, Bellarmine and Suarez lay this foundation for the pope's authority: 1. That the church universal is a politic body; and he quoteth the same scripture that our brethren use to do; and 2, he saith therefore it must have a supreme power existing somewhere; for as there cannot be *una respublica sine civili suprema potestate*, nor *unus exercitus sine imperatore*, so nor can there be *ecclesiæ politia una* without an external supreme power suited thereunto. And if there be such a politic body, see how easy a step it is for the pope's monarchy in the third place; for if the institution do fall first upon it, then there is reason supposed that Christ hath ordered a constant existent government, for the greatest institution deserveth the greatest blessing; and he that gave ordinances to every particular church, pastors and teachers, would be sure to give them to the whole, considered as a politic body. So Bellarmine argueth also, that if the particular churches had not been united into one body, one pastor might suffice each; but if they be all united into one great body, there must be (saith he) one external pastor over the whole.

2. To think that Jesus Christ should make an institution of a doctrinal principle only (which should not have existence), namely of this, that the church universal is a politic body, only to set up peddling presbyteries by virtue of it, or provincial assemblies, when yet his institution is by that principle supposed to fall primarily upon the church universal, is not likely.

3. The competition would be, whether a general council should be the constant existent government, or one man. A general council there never was yet, one that was truly general (as all acknowledge); but that some churches have been left out, either those in the Indies or Gothland, or somewhere else, they have been still, as Chamier argues against the pope; and if it could be, it could be but rarely; but Christ would have appointed his government (if his prime institution had fallen here) for one time as well as for another. But now, as when Moses was wanting, they set up a calf, the Christian world, if this principle were true, would say, Here is an universal church, but where is a government extant?

4. And then, if a general council were extant, yet herein one man may moderate; and it is not against the essence or the constitution of government (as presbyterial divines acknowledge) that one man should be a constant moderator.

And then, 5, if that this general council were dissolved at some time, they might have the same power that a national assembly useth to have in Scotland, to make a committee of a company of a head city to be commissioners till the council meet again, and this would be a good standing conclave (such as is at Rome) for the whole church.

And then, 6, if you would help it out with the law of nature, as you use to do with this principle of the universal church, if the institution be not very express, the law of nature will as well set up one man to whom appeals may be made, and the analogy of the forms of civil governments and monarchies of the world, which all the world runs after, will help to strengthen it.

And then, 7, you shall have the examples in the Old Testament (which also in this case you use to have recourse to) to back it. There was a perpetual sanhedrim where there was a national universal church, and there was an high priest; and if the high priest were ceremonial, yet that one man should be over the several order of priests was according to the law of nations, whereby the eldest in a tribe was over the rest. And to have this one man and this conclave to be peculiarly designed for the church universal, is more practicable; for if there were such an institution, who would not rather think that there should be one man, or some men, whose business should be set apart to watch over all in common, with apostolic promise made to them, than that those that have charges of their own little congregations (which congregations are to be the main of their care) should be all catholic elders? That other way the church would be easily governed, for particular pastors would only have the care of particular churches, and one man perhaps, togegether with others singled out, should be appointed for nothing else but the public; whereas this principle would make it every man's care, and so no man's, or divide them between the general and their particular charges.

8. Then you would have all the inconveniences of an aristocracy in the government of so great a body, which will prove equal to those of a monarchy; for, first, all heresies have ever been from the clergy and their divisions; and secondly, the church would ordinarily this way want a supreme government, which the other way of one man would be constant in; and thirdly, divisions would not so easily be allayed. So as indeed it is more rational (if this principle had been true, that the great body of the church universal should be a politic body), that Christ should have instituted a constant conclave for the government of it under some one man.

Lastly, it would make the clergy the catholic church in the creed, for to 'tell the church,' if it be a politic body, is to tell these elders which represent the whole; yea, by this you would make two churches, one of the elders, another of the faithful; and if you distinguish it yet further into the visible and invisible, you make three. And then, as for that catholic church of the elders, they would be a fit body for the pope presently to be head of them, and to step into the throne, for the pope and the popish clergy make that one beast mentioned in the Revelation.

2. This principle would hinder all reformation, if practised according to the law of it, and prove all reformed churches schismatics. For if there were, *de jure*, a general assembly of all Grecian, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Persian Christians, and they would set down the doctrine which we shall all be confined to, and we should be, by the law of the universal catholic politic church, obliged to an uniformity with them, or with the greater part of them, as well as now we think ourselves to be with the reformed churches, how would this set the clock of reformation back! And yet, according to this principle, we are more bound to the law of uniformity to this general body than we are to any particulars. For institution doth fall first, according to this notion, upon the church universal, and therefore the law of it would oblige more; and so, if we refuse to do this, we should make ourselves schismatics from the great ordinance and institution of Christ. Yea, this must have been the law of reforming churches in all ages with respect to the church universal. For the law is perpetual, and is at no time dispensable;

for Christ is with his own ordinances to the end of the world. If Luther had been bound up by this law, how had the church been reformed? We should not have gained that in seven hundred years that he did in twenty. Yea, if this synod* had been so chosen by the law of the universal church, as to take in the ministers of all England, so that the law were to call all, one as well as another (for one and all are ministers as well as churches) this would have spoiled your reformation. And besides, this would make us all schismatics by our national covenant, for if we were under the law of the church universal as a politic body, we do make a separation from this law by combining ourselves only with reformed churches, that are so small and inconsiderable a part of the church universal.

3. It justifies non-residency, or makes non-residence *jure divino;* for ministers, being elders of a church universal by a prior institution, can never be absent from their flock. And every man may pretend, for a more general service of the whole, whereof he is a member, that the lesser should give way. And this was the chief grounds for non-residency in the bishops' times, that every man was a minister of the church of England in general, and so he might serve the whole; and therefore, though he were a professor in the university, he was serving the whole church, and so he might hold other livings too, and yet be absent from them.

4. It layeth a foundation of bringing in a foreign power to bind all or any of the kingdoms in Europe. It will bind any; for the greater part of the reformed churches, if we should go no further, may challenge, by virtue of this ordinance and institution, that what they agree upon we all should receive.

Obj. But you will say still, that the magistrate may still call those universal elders to meet in a council, or not call them.

Ans. 1. But still, if this be an ordinance, they are to call themselves; it is their duty, they are to assume it if the magistrate neglect. And,

Ans. 2. However, when they are called, they may impose their canons. And,

Ans. 3. The magistrate is bound to be subject, for they are Christians, and so *pars ecclesiæ*, and so to be subject to this ordinance, for they have not a power to break the ordinance of Christ; and they are not to resist it, for there is a law of Christ's institution upon it. If it be but consultive to the magistrate, then they say no more than we; if obligatory, then it bindeth, and then they must either take the magistrates into the council as members also, which is the usual salvo for it, and so they are parts of the parliament and commonwealth, which hinders the freeness of the vote of the ecclesiastic persons; and then, if the major part which carry it be not the magistrates, but ministers, as usually they are, then the magistrates, in their civil assemblies, when they come to confirm it, are bound either to ratify it or not. If not, then the authority of the synod is but consultive to them; if they be bound, then this synod is a superior power to the king and state, and this within their own dominions, by virtue of this catholic principle. And then, without their dominions, the greater number of churches will oblige both the one and the other, and is a power over princes; yea, and a foreign power may be brought in hereby, and as well as by popery, only with this difference (if you cut off infallibility), that there is but one man, the pope, but here an aristocracy of divines.

Lastly, any among us would not be more bound to the elders of our own churches than to the bishops and elders of eastern churches, if there was to be found more of the catholic church, or a greater part among them; for hereby I have as good a warrant and authority to cleave to them. Co-

* The assembly of divines at Westminster.

habitation doth not oblige me to my own elders, when the institution is universal all the world over.

Those places that are ordinarily alleged, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv., although they import communion amongst churches, by virtue of that catholic obligation, yet none of them hold forth that that catholic church is a politic body. Indeed, it is said there that God hath set up apostles, &c., in that church; but it is as a man may say, he hath set up kings and emperors in the world; it doth not therefore follow that the whole world is one politic body, and all the kings and emperors have an authority over the universe, but only partitive in their several dominions.

And the communion which the members are obliged unto, and the bands and ties there mentioned, are not only between the saints and the churches, and the officers thereof now extant, and existing in the world; the catholic state of the church in all ages is implied, with whom we profess to hold a communion now, and we ought to do it as well as with the churches now extant. And that is clearly the scope in Eph. iv., and 1 Cor. xii. 28, for he speaks of prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers, that are given to build up the churches in the faith, until the coming of Christ, every age being knit unto another by certain bands and ties; and the church in every age receiving a benefit by the pastors and teachers, and by the prophets and apostles, and their writings in former ages; and in all ages they have conspired so far as to preserve fundamental truths. And from those places it may as well be argued, that pastors and teachers, and general councils in former ages, have a juridical power upon all the churches afterward, as that the present churches have, for he speaks both of the one and the other as one *totum complexum*.

Obj. And if it be said that the apostles were ministers of the church universal, having jurisdiction over the whole universal church; therefore once the whole universal church was a politic body in their time, and why not now? it is thus answered:

Ans. 1. Besides the difference of apostles and other elders, elsewhere spoken of, even to the apostles themselves all the churches universal did not make one politic body, to be governed in common; but the apostles still, as they came to several churches, had power in all those churches severally apart, so as all those churches are not called one church, no, not in respect of the apostles' government. But this opinion of the universal catholic church being a body politic to all these elders, would make it to be in order to a combination under those elders as one whole politic body, governed by them in common, and in and by common assemblies; whereas the apostles, severally and apart, had, in all these churches, the power still as they came occasionally; and therefore to assert that particular churches, having their particular eldership, by whom they are governed, make up one mystical church, is in this to answer the pattern of the apostles' government itself, that as the whole church then was not governed by the apostles as a whole church, but only by parts,—that is, the particular churches by an apostle as he came into it, or as he had occasion to write to it,—that so now this whole church is also by parts governed, that is, the particular churches are governed by their several elders, having jurisdiction therein, and therein only. And if unto apostles themselves, this whole church was not a politic body, taken as one, then much less to elders of particular churches.

2. And also, further, the meaning of that place in 1 Cor. xii. 28 is not that every elder hath an authoritative politic jurisdiction in all churches, as occasion is, which is evident by this, because other particulars are there

mentioned, as, namely, ruling elders and deacons (which our brethren do understand by those words, *helps* and *governments*, for so it is in the original), so then they also should be officers, as deacons, and as governors in all churches also. And therefore his meaning is only this, it is as if it should be said, in a commonwealth he hath set noblemen and judges, &c., who have the power in the whole, and every part of a kingdom; and he hath set justices of peace, and constables, and headboroughs, &c., but it would not follow, that as the noblemen and judges have power in every part, so the ordinary justices of peace, and every constable or headborough hath; and yet, if from that place they would argue, that ordinary elders have power in all churches, as elders, they must also acknowledge deacons to have the like.

3. And that place in Ephes. iv. speaks of pastors and teachers, in respect of doctrine, and therefore mentioneth only those that did labour in the word and doctrine, such as prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers; and speaks of their being ordained to keep that unity of the faith; and therefore speaks only of their doctrinal power, not of their judicial power of acts of government.

4. And it is farther to be considered, that when it is said that he had set apostles, &c., in the church, he speaks not of officers in the concrete, or of this and that church, in this or that age; but he speaks of church and of officers in the abstract, he speaks of the kind; and so answerably we read, Eph. iv. 8, 'He gave gifts to men,' that is, to such officers in the abstract.

5. The general church receiveth pastors and teachers, but as formed up into particulars, therefore they are set in it only *partitivè*; and though the church is said to be the subject in which they are set, yet not as a collective body, and therefore they do not make up a general government.

Obj. It may be objected, that the apostles are said to be the church universal.

Ans. 1. They are not set in it as a collective body; and if they were, yet as all pastors cannot supply the office of an apostle, when met all together, so they are not set as apostles, as the apostles were. The earls in a kingdom are set otherwise in a kingdom than the constables are; and therefore the meeting of all the constables in a kingdom cannot make up one office of an earl, or the relation they have in the whole kingdom.

2. The apostles were executively set in particular churches only, and so the whole church was not one church, in relation to them, nor did all churches make up one church, in relation to them, for a government.

Then, 3, we acknowledge that they may be all set in this body as apostles and as elders, and that by virtue of communion of churches; and if you will keep it in that mystical way, they are to be respected as elders of such and such churches, by all the churches of the world.

As it is again objected out of those places, Eph. iv. and 1 Cor. xii., that the gifts there, that are given to the church, are not proper and peculiar to the elect.

Ans. It is true; but yet, though they are not given only to those who are elect in the issue, and in the event, yet they are given only to those that were visibly such unto men, and to be taken for such; and such as, if we had lived in those times, would have been to be accounted saints by us. All that are true members of churches we are to look upon as elect, for they are elect to us; and therefore he writes to the 'church elect in Babylon.' They are all saints to us, and so they are visibly such that make the visible church. And that the visible church there, though consisting of men that in issue proved not the elect, is yet under the notion of such as are, appeareth by this, that they are said to drink into one Spirit, that is, into the Holy Ghost,

alluding to the receiving of the sacrament; because that none should be supposed to be of that catholic visible body, or of particular bodies of churches, but such as are supposed to partake of the Holy Ghost, as every true saint doth. And the drinking into one Spirit there cannot be meant of extraordinary gifts, which may be supposed to be given to reprobates, because the Spirit in extraordinary gifts is not received by the sacrament.

Obj. Whereas it is said, that the elders and the officers are given to the whole universal church, therefore that is a politic body; I answer, that by the same reason mankind should be a politic body also, for they are said to be given to men, Eph. iv., and the gifts that are there said to be given to men, are not to be understood of the inherent gifts or qualifications, in respect of those men they are given unto (as the grace of an apostleship to an apostle), but it is meant of men giftedly put into office, given unto other men, or to mankind; which appeareth by this, because they are given by* conversion, before men are of the catholic body, as well as for building up after they are in it.

It is again objected, that 1 Cor. xii. it is said, that the members are to 'Honour one another, that there be no schisms in the body,' ver. 25; 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it,' ver. 26.

Ans. As there is a double body or church to Christ, the one mystical and the other instituted, so there is a double union, the one mystical, though external, and the other more special for government and jurisdiction. And the same things that are spoken of the duty of members in a body instituted, that are a body to Christ in particular, as the apostle afterward distinguisheth, are due also to all saints by virtue of their mystical relation. And we find that the apostles indeed do argue the instance of the communion of the body catholic, which is between all saints, to exemplify and to illustrate the duties that are to be between saints, in a particular body so joined; yet by way of similitude, but not oneness for kind. And because also all the duties of love, which, in particular congregations, the members are to perform one to another, are duties by a mystical relation, as well as by that special obligation; yet they are bound to them by an obligation, beyond that of the mystical relation, which they bear to all saints in the world. For though the church mystical universal affordeth matter for such an instituted congregational church, yet that they should thus meet in Christ's name is a superadded form to this matter, and lays a further obligation upon the members.

CHAPTER II.

That the institution for worship and government falleth not upon the saints in a nation, qua *nation or kingdom, as the seat of it.*

Though the pattern of the Jewish church be urged to prove such a national church, yet it will not serve the turn.

1. For it was not therefore a church, because a nation, but because there were no more nations that God had chosen, nor would choose till Christ came; and therefore if any other turned proselyte, they were to turn Jews, and to be as natives.

2. The instance of the Jewish church will rather serve for the proof of an universal church, than for any evidence that there should be as many churches as there be nations. When the Jews did turn Christians, they were the same nation, yet the apostles do nowhere write to them as a national church. They write not to the *church* of Judea, but the *churches.*

* Qu. 'for'?—ED.

3. That the church of the Jews was a type of the churches in nations, as nations, let that be shewn. We can shew that the whole nation and temple worship was a type of congregations, and that 'royal nation' (as that whole nation was then called), and the 'holy priesthood,' is a type of the saints in all nations.

4. God at first set up a church government, suitable to that of a kingdom, and suited unto the government of a world; that policy is therefore called the elements of this world, unto which the church in the New Testament is not to be conformed, Rom. xii.

5. And then, when there was a national church, there was a worship for the whole nation, as a nation, to come unto, and so a government in the place that God should choose for all to appeal unto; but there are no such orders now.

6. If the institution do fall upon them, it must fall upon them either as they are a church in a kingdom, or as a kingdom; but not as a church in a kingdom, for *qua* church, there is a greater church out of that kingdom, namely, the universal.

7. This opinion, though it seems indeed calculated to comply with magistracy, for it divideth the independency of government according to the division of the supreme power of magistrates, and so would seem to fence them from any external power, from any other kingdoms or churches, yet it makes the church-power in that kingdom independent upon the magistrate; and that united into a greater body would be too hard for them, whereas the dispersing it into particular congregations makes it easily wieldable.

Neither doth the institution fall upon a conformity, either to the extent or to the government of cities, as those who are for episcopacy have intended, and some presbyterial divines also, and both upon the same grounds, although with this difference, that the bishops would have the government of churches to be conformed to that of the cities, taking in the villages about them, and so to make a diocese and a diocesan church; but those for the presbytery contract it to the extent of a city within itself, and so make a classical church; the opinions of either differing in this respect only, viz., the point of extent of larger and lesser jurisdiction, the one confined within the city walls, the other extending without.

1. Because, if it were so, then the conformity either must fall upon the government of cities, or the bounds of the place; that look what extent either the government or bounds of the local circuit of cities have, the same extent should your classical presbyteries have, conformable thereunto, and in asserting either unavoidable absurdities would follow.

1. To make the government conformable to the government of cities, as their extent should fall out, is to make a worldly government the pattern of ecclesiastical, is wholly to conform spiritual government to the government of the world; and then the same degrees of officers of superiority and inferiority that is in cities, should be in ecclesiastical government.

2. The conformity must rather fall upon the bounds of the governments of cities, than upon the circuit or material consideration, because that which makes it a city is the government of it, whether the bounds of it be within the walls, or other towns about it, whether it extend to a larger circuit or to a less.

3. It must either fall upon a city, as having many congregations in it; and if so, it might as well have fallen upon villages in the country, capable by association to be many churches as well; and the one would be as uncertain as the other, because there may be many congregations in the one as well as in the other. Or else, 2, it must fall upon the form of the govern-

ment of cities. Or else, 3, upon cities of such and such a circuit, and some cities greater and some lesser; that would be uncertain also, because some cities are greater and some lesser.

2. The foundation of this assertion cannot be a conformity to the government of the cities amongst the Jews; for, 1, the villages among the Jews had a government in them as well as the cities. 2. Suppose that the government of the Gentiles, in their cities, was not conformed to the government of the Jews in their cities (which may well be supposed), for the government of the Gentiles was oftentimes to have whole empires under the government of a city; so Rome had, and then all the world under Rome, whilst it was a city government, must have been one classical church; or, however, among the Gentiles, the cities were the head of a whole province, and of all the villages under it, and it is so in many cities at this day; and that would make for a diocesan government, and not presbyterial.

If thus the bounds cannot be fixed, we are still to seek even in cities what should be the bounds, and are as uncertain as in villages. So as the conclusion is, the bounds according to this measure are uncertain.

3. God doth not shape a spiritual government unto the political, and the bounds thereof. Political government goes by the bounds of the soil, so doth not the spiritual. All that do live within such a place, or within such a country, because they are of that soil, fall under the same political government; but there is no reason that they should fall under the same spiritual.

4. If the frame of the church were to be conformed to the city government, then, as the city did take in the suburban towns, the daughters round about, so the church should not be confined only to the compass of the city, but extend to a whole province, as the bishops argue for a diocesan church.

5. Christ's government is suitable to all ages, times, and places; but now in all ages and places there is not the city government, and there could not be the same rule for the government of churches in villages, and therefore it did not suit all places.

6. Jesus Christ's way is rather conformed to the synagogue way, for so the churches are called, and it is therefore conformed to the government of the synagogues, although in cities.

7. If this were the ordinance of God, to conform church government to the government of cities, then all in London should make one church, because it is but one city; and Alexandria and Grand Cairo, if it were converted, would be so too, nay, Rome itself (whereof the present Rome is but the tenth part of what it was, as Lipsius shews) must have been but one church if they had been all converted; and there should have been but one classical presbytery to have governed all the churches there. Yea, in some places there are two cities built together that have the privileges of cities, as Constantinople and Galata, London and Westminster, the two Pragues; yea, Jerusalem had the city of David within it, and so there must have been two classical presbyteries in Jerusalem from the first; for those of the city of David might have challenged the privilege of it if the church had been conformed to a city government; and perhaps that was the reason why we read of two companies of the three-and-twenty elders that did sit in Jerusalem, because each city had an eldership of twenty-three; and so there being two cities in that one, that of David and the other of Jerusalem itself, there might be two elderships for those two cities, besides their great Sanhedrim.

8. When cities are decayed and do lessen, and are brought low, it may be to as small a number of inhabitants as villages; yet they often retain their privileges as cities, as many decayed incorporations do. Now then, if there

were but one congregation left in such a lessened city, it would claim, by virtue of this city, privilege to be entire within itself.

Obj. But the apostle hath said, in Tit. i., 'Ordain elders in every city,' and that is parallel with that in Acts xiv., 'They ordain elders in every church,' holding forth the pattern of a city, and the government thereof for the bounds of it, to be set for that of a church.

Ans. 1. That place in Acts xiv., 'in every church,' hath relation, as well to churches in villages as in cities; and so to churches in those first times of the gospel, that consisted of no more than might meet in one place; and, therefore, as well it may be interpreted, that there was but as many as would make but one church in every city, as suiting the phrase of his direction, in relation to what number of Christians were supposed to be in each city of Crete, when first Titus came thither in the beginning of the gospel; and this number may well be supposed to be no more than could make up one congregation, and it was well if so too.

Ans. 2. Ordinary elders in every church implies farther, that if there were more churches to be in a city, that then he should ordain the elders, Κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, to every church apart.

Ans. 3. That it is so appears; because, as hath been shewn, by πόλις, *city*, is meant small towns as well as cities.

Ans. 4. The reason why his direction runs to ordain elders in every city, was because, though they did preach the gospel in villages, yet principally in cities at the first, because they were to leaven the countries. And the apostles, when they did write to churches in a province, did use to write to the church of the head city, as more eminent, not because that was either a mother church, as the bishops say, or a classical church of more churches, as the presbyterians say, but because it was more eminent, and from it the epistle might be spread to others, as Paul's Epistle to the Colossians was ordered to be sent to Laodicea, which was, in all likelihood, a less city than Colosse. And thus, when they write to the churches of Syria and Cilicia, Acts xv., they write especially to Antioch. So when he would write to all the churches about Corinth, he nameth especially the church of Corinth, together with them; and wrappeth up all the rest thus, 'and all that call upon the name of the Lord.'

Obj. It was the ordination of the apostles in the primitive times, that all in a city should be one church, both because the distinction of churches, and also their names, are taken from the city, as the church of Ephesus, &c. And therefore, whether in one consideration or more, whether for the present or for the time to come, the saints, in such and such a city, were to be one church; and a congregational church they could not be, therefore a distinction of a classical church was intended by a church in cities. And the elders had charge given them, to take care of that whole city to convert them. And to this pattern of a city government were the villages also to be conformed, several villages making an association into one church, as those cities did.

Ans. 1. To the first part of the objection I answer, that they are called one church in a city, and so distinguished. Because there was but one church for the present, as in Acts xiii. 1, Κατα τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν, 'the church existing at' Antioch, that is, which at present was there; it doth not follow that all the churches, that should afterwards be there, should be but one church. So as Bains saith, there is an adequate acception of these phrases, *per accidens*, not because the city and church was to make but one church, but because the Christians, by occasion of their number, not being then too great, were formed into one church, not because there was to be but one. Now he,

who thus useth them promiscuously, doth imply that one church was as yet constituted; not that there was to be but one, through the circuit of a city, suburbs, and country. Thus likewise it is easily answered to the purpose of the proposition, for thus the multitude of citizens, converted and unconverted, could not be a church of one congregation; yet the number of those who, in city, suburbs, or territories, were actually converted, was no more than might be ordered into one church; and the apostles framing these into one, on the present occasion, did not exclude the after-constituting of any other within the same local bounds. But if there had been more, there would have been other ways to have distinguished them; as when there were many synagogues in a city, they were distinguished (for all the synagogues could not have been called by the name of that one city, so nor the congregations); and perhaps that was the reason why that a school, which was a kind of a synagogue, was, for distinction's sake, called the school of Tyrannus, as being the ruler of it.

Ans. 2. If that were a reason, then also the name of a village or smaller town, as that of Cenchrea, would make as strong an argument, that in every small town, if there be a church there, that it should be one entire church (having the government wholly in itself), as well as that many congregations in a city should become one church for government.

Ans. 3. The name of a church, in a city, is not taken simply from the city, but from the people; as in the Revelation, the church of the Smyrnians, and of the Laodiceans, &c. Suppose they had removed (as in those times, through persecution, they often did) to some other city, they would have been the church of the Smyrnians, as well as the church at Arnheim was called the English church; so as the name doth not refer simply to a city, and the bounds thereof. And when there was a church of strangers, of Aquila and Priscilla, &c., in Rome, it is called the church in their house; and so also when they were removed to Ephesus, it bore the same name, to distinguish it from the church of the Ephesians. It is one exception against us, that when we say the bounds of a church should be so many as can meet in one place, we hereby do fetch the constitution of a church from what is merely external and accidental to it; and the exception were true, if we fetch it from any one set or standing place, or house of meeting; but we fetch it from that which is essential to a church, which is oneness of communion in ordinances together, meeting with one accord, as in the Acts their meetings are characterised, which, because it cannot be done unless they do meet in some place or other, hence we so express it, not as that thing the ordination is set upon, but as the necessary consequent or adjunct. But this exception made against us falls fully and directly upon them that would make a city the extent, either of the local bounds or the government thereof, a pattern or measure of a classical church, and the institution of it.

If many churches had been in one city, they might have been distinguished by the names of some of the rulers, or as now they are by the streets, or places of their constant meetings; for as if the Holy Ghost doth write to the angel of the church of Ephesus, as if the king doth write to the city of London, he should entitle his letter to the mayor and aldermen, as writing to the whole corporation in their names, so also might several churches in cities have been as well distinguished by the names of their rulers, and of their elders and pastors, as Tyrannus his school was. And there are other reasons why in that case the names should be taken from the place; for cohabitation and dwelling together in a place, we acknowledge is a ground why the saints, so far as possibly they can, should meet in one church-fellowship, and not make several fellowships. And we much rather think that still the denomi-

nation of one church in a city did hold forth this rule, that in all cities, the saints dwelling together, and so elsewhere, should make as big churches as they could, to shew their unity, and to make the worship more solemn, and to have more of the assistance of the Holy Ghost; and therefore they should not make many congregations where there might be one only.

Ans. 4. To the second part of the objection, concerning the conversion which the elders are to take care of, I answer, 1. To preach is one thing, to censure is another. And, besides, at that rate of arguing, all those that a man begets to Christ, he hath therefore authority over, to rule them, to be their minister. 2. The elders at Ephesus indeed had a charge as elders, by way of government over the whole flock, the church that God had redeemed by his blood, that is, of those that were converted; and although that they were to endeavour to convert others (for how should the gospel otherwise be propagated), yet if more had been converted, then there must have been churches multiplied, but still in the uniform frame that this first church was, having the same privileges, and so to have new elders placed over them, as over a new flock. And, besides, they are not called elders of Ephesus, but elders of the church at Ephesus. The care of elders set in a city to convert, was to be extended as well to the neighbour villages as to the cities, especially then when they had gained as yet but few in a city, and then by this reason those in the villages were obliged to be associated with them, as well as those in a city, although all the city should also be converted, especially if those in the villages were the first converts; and this is one of the episcopal grounds for a diocesan church; they in effect tell the same story for the rearing up of episcopal government.

Ans. 5. To the third part of the objection we reply, that the way of constitution of churches under the gospel, being uniform according to Christ's institution, both in villages and cities, it is therefore squared as well to the condition of the one as the other, and therefore a church in a village may as well be made the pattern for the constituting of churches in a city, as a church in a city for forming one in a village. But Christ hath framed his institution so as will serve both; and the certain rules for both are the due bounds of a church set (whereof there are many sure and certain characters in the word, from the nature and thing itself), that so many as dwell together, that can conveniently meet in one place, should become one church.

We grant (as Bains in the like case, page 12, conclusion 2, concerning a diocesan church) that God might have made this pattern of city government an ordinance of church government, as he did once take a family government under the old law, and made that a church, and extended the bounds still by a family, as they grew either greater or lesser; but as then, if a man's family had spread into many families, though he was the priest of all these families in public worship, because he was the eldest of the family, whilst he lived, yet that would not have been a binding law to several other families living together, that had not sprung one from another, that they should have come under the same law of association that the others did. And therefore, though this were granted concerning cities, it would not follow that the villages must be conformed thereunto.

CHAPTER III.

That the external institutions of Christ, for the government of his saints under the New Testament, are not the same that was under the law, nor can the government of the Jewish church be made a certain rule for the government of the church of Christ.

There are many things that were commanded to the Jews which are obligatory to us Christians, though there are also many things which were rules and laws to them which are not so to us. It will therefore be necessary, in stating the case first, to shew what is equally binding to us both.

1. All such duties as depend not upon institution, but are duties belonging to the first commandment, as to pray, to hear the word, to give thanks, must needs continue as well under the New Testament as under the Old, and are the same.

2. Such things as then had a morality in them, yet if the morality was only by mere institution, which depends upon the will of God (which divines call moral positions), even such institutions, in their own individual nature, cannot be urged upon us as rules. As to instance in that of the Sabbath day: if any should infer that that seventh day should be the Sabbath day under the New Testament which was the seventh after the creation, it would be a false reasoning, although, indeed, the institution of the seventh day to be the Sabbath was not ceremonial merely, but had a morality in it, for it was from the creation. The two sacraments of circumcision and the passover had assuredly, besides the ceremonialness annexed to them, the institution of typifying of Christ to come (which circumcision did by blood, and being administered the eighth day); these sacraments signifying Jesus Christ, the substance of them must needs be moral, and that by institution, as well as ours are now, as in 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 'They did all eat of the same spiritual meat (the same spiritual manna), and all drank of the same spiritual drink.' But yet it doth not follow that the same sacraments for substance (cutting off the ceremonial part) should continue, but God was pleased to institute other two in their rooms.

3. Yet whatsoever was moral in the substance of the Jewish institution then, there is this equality, that Jesus Christ should institute something in the room of it in the New Testament. As for example, because there was an high priest, because there was an house of God then, the apostle therefore argues (Heb. xx. 21–26), that we, having an high priest over the house of God, there are assemblies to be now as well as then; but that these assemblies should be formed up, and cast into the same latitude and extent, and the like, which their assemblies had then, herein a new institution putteth the difference. They had national assemblies then, not so now; the priests were maintained by tithes and offerings then; the equity of this continueth, and the apostle urgeth it in his epistle to the Corinthians, but yet it followeth not that their maintenance now should be the same way. And although there was a moral equality in it, yet the apostle superaddeth, 'So I ordain in all the churches,' 1 Cor. vii. 17.

4. When the gospel hath once made an institution in the room of what was under the law (as it hath done baptism instead of circumcision, though not exactly on the same moral ground, yet on the same evangelical ground, as baptism was the substance extant, under the type of circumcision), this will warrant the application of baptism unto like infant children now, when the gospel itself also holds forth the same privilege for substance unto such children now as it did then, and renews the same promise to them, though

in an evangelical way, far differing from that in the Old Testament, which contained a typicalness in it. And this is not to raise up a new institution, it is only the application of an institution to a person, and that also when the gospel holds forth the same ground which the law did. But if any would reason, that because there was a circumcision under the law, a sacrament of initiation into the church, therefore there must be the same under the gospel (if they cannot shew that Jesus hath appointed it for the continuing of such an institution), the argument from the Old will not hold; or if they would argue, that it should be administered in the same latitude; or that the same persons who did administer circumcision under the Old Testament may administer baptism now, we believe our brethren will not concede to it, though the argument will be as strong one way as the other, for the father of the family might circumcise them, and did, but they would have only ministers to baptize now; and they too circumcised them in their families, and did not bring their children to the temple.

5. That the laws of the Old Testament do help up to regulate many institutions in the New, we acknowledge (as likewise the laws of nature do), but they will not be warrant sufficient to set up the like. So the rules of the judicial law, concerning the punishments of criminal acts, that none should be condemned under two or three witnesses; these rules will serve unto, and perhaps ought to be received by, every state (as some have held) to regulate their proceedings against malefactors. But yet unto Jewish policy (take it for the government of it, and the ranks of officers among them, and power they had), nations are not bound so, as though the rules of equity, whereby that policy did proceed, were perpetual, yet the question remains still of the power. That ministers should be maintained, as they were then, the equity of the law holds, but it will no way follow, that there should be the same ranks of ministers.

6. That the New Testament entitles some of those ordinances that itself hath anew instituted, with the same names and words used in the Old Testament, argues not that those ordinances are to be framed and formed according to the analogy of the old, but they have the same names, because that the old were types of these. Thus that our ordinances now are called sacrifices; that Christ is called an high priest; that the officers of the church are called a presbytery; that excommunication is called a purging out the old leaven, and many such like, in the evangelist: all this will not prove that there should be sacrifices, high priests, &c., under the New Testament. In the evangelist, Christ, speaking of the teachers of the New Testament, saith, Mat. xxiii. 34, 'I will send you wise men, and scribes,' &c.; but yet it follows not that the orders of the officers of the New Testament should be answerable to the wise men, and the scribes; so when a believer or a church is called the temple of God, when the saints are called a royal nation, and the like, no inference can be made, that there should be now a temple and a national church.

7. There were many things which are moral now, that were not moral then. To cast out of the church for moral sins, as such, *qua* moral, is the law of Christ now; but under the old law, they did not keep men from ordinances for sins as moral, but as having a ceremonial uncleanness annexed to them. No man is to put his wife away now because she is a heathen, but they were to put their wives away then, if heathens, after Moses his law was settled. In destroying matters of idolatry, they were to be much stricter than we are bound to be, as meats sacrificed to idols, they were in no place to eat thereof. Daniel refused the king's meat; but out of the idol's temple, we may eat things that have been sacrificed to idols, as the

apostle saith. They were to destroy all the temples and groves, &c., but if places have been abused to idolatry, we under the gospel may make use of them; they were to destroy the Canaanites out of the land, not we so now; they were to burn idolaters' goods, as in Jericho, &c., not so now.

Having thus made way by these particulars premised, I shall now prove my proposition, that the Jewish economy is no pattern or rule for modelling the church of Christ, under the gospel.

1. 'The priesthood being changed, there is a necessity of a change of the law,' Heb. vii. 12, and so of the law of the government, which depends on Christ's priestly office. We having a new high priest over the house of God, we have a new order in this house. For he is the apostle and high priest of our profession, and it was meet it should appear he was the new high priest, by altering the institution for worship and government. So then that old law, which depended upon institutions, as the high priesthood itself did, is to be changed, and a new law of institutions is to come in the room of it; and therefore in the Heb. ix. 10, it is called a *reformation*, and the time of the gospel is called 'the time of reformation.'

2. That Jewish frame and form of government is called the elements of the world; and therefore, both in Col. ii. and Rom. xii., the apostle bids us under the gospel not to be conformed, neither for worship nor government (further than as Jesus Christ hath been pleased to take what was before and make it anew) to the elements of the world. So in Gal. iv. 2, 3, he saith, they were under tutors and governors till they came to be of man's estate, or to be of age; which under the gospel they are in comparison. And, indeed, the gospel being more spiritual, the frame of the government, and institutions of it, are not formed to a worldly way to governments of nations and of kingdoms, as that was then, to an outward external glory, as their worship also was. As God hath chosen the preaching of the word, which is foolishness, so he hath also chosen many of those things which are vile, and base, and contemptible, and a foolishness of government in comparison of what was then. And this is it deceiveth the world; for the gospel is a mystery throughout. He chooseth the synagogue, and not the temple; he chooseth a congregation and eldership, and not the Sanhedrim; he chooseth baptism, and not circumcision, &c.

3. Our Lord and Saviour speaks altogether of a new church to be made, a church gathered in his name: as when he instituted baptism, to shew that it was a new ordinance, he bids them baptize in his name; so, to shew that he erected a frame of a new church, he bids that it should be gathered in his name.

4. Our brethren's principles, that hold the universal church to be the seat and subject of Christ's institution, argue this; for as his church now over all nations, both Jew and Gentile, is a differing seat from that of the Jew only, so answerably, to set in his church apostles and prophets, &c., instead of chief priests, &c., is a new institution; and it is certain, that that church whereof the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv., is the church of the New Testament. And therefore, if the church universal being a politic, be argued from thence, it is by a new institution differing from the former, because the church of the New Testament, which he speaks of there, began with the apostles. And besides the institution fell upon the church of the Jews *qua* national, but this falls upon the church *qua* universal, in all nations, else it would not extend to all nations to be equal standers in it; whereas, under the law, they were not to be so with the Jews, but were to come under that national covenant only when proselyted.

4. There seems to have been several sorts of policies and orders extant

under the Old Testament; and unto which of these should the conformity now be made? By what rules should we now judge?

(1.) There were chief rulers over several bodies of the priests and Levites, to which government, the bishops say, their order is an allusion. There was also a power in these priests and Levites, proper and peculiar to them, to judge of the clean and unclean, and concerning the matters of worship in the temple. And this government was purely ecclesiastical; and unto this therefore, rather should the analogy refer of matters in the church, seeing that these were purely such.

(2.) Again, there were the civil judicatures in their cities and towns, and in their great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, for all controversies within their gates, as the distinction is in Deut. xvii. Yet these were all* ecclesiastical, but indeed mixed both in respect of causes and persons; their church and commonwealth being so mixed, as it is hard to distinguish what belonged to them merely as a commonwealth, and what belonged to them as a church, in respect of what came under the cognizance and power of those courts.

(3.) Then again, there was their synagogical government, which seems to be differing from what either the priests had in the temple, in respect of persons clean and unclean ceremonially, or over one another; or from courts of judicature in their gates. A government those synagogues had, for there are the rulers of them mentioned; and also punishments they had, for when the Romans took away their government in their gates, they scourged in their synagogues. There were admonitions also, or excommunications, or casting men out of their synagogues. The great Sanhedrim, and their other courts, did punish by civil mulcts, and the Sanhedrim did put to death. In the temple, the priests kept out the unclean, and the judgment of that was not by the Sanhedrim, but by the priests, that did look to the worship of the temple; but the synagogues did cast a man out, and the priests did not supervise the government of the synagogues.

And that all this was a matter of a differing cognisance from what was transacted in their other courts, is evident by this, that for many sins (besides the civil punishments that were adjudged in the courts of their gates, as to restore, and the like) a man was farther obliged to come to the temple with confession, and with a sacrifice; so as the charge of the things of the temple, and the order and discipline thereof, was another thing than that of their civil courts. And although a man was cast out of the synagogues, and was in respect of such a communion as a heathen and a publican, yet he might still come to the temple and partake in the worship thereof. But that the Sanhedrim did at any time pronounce that sentence, that a man should be as an heathen or publican, that this was proper to their courts, we believe not. Now, it is left very uncertain to which of these the analogy of the government of a gospel church should be accommodated.

Obj. It is said that our Saviour Christ, in Mat. xviii., reflected upon some bench or court, the next then extant, to which the people were wont to resort among the Jews, and so intimated that his will was that the church under the gospel should be formed up conformably to us, and that so it should be like to that of the Jews, and so the policy of the church of the New Testament should be conformed to the policy of the Old by virtue of that institution. And from thence it is argued that there should be ruling elders that are not teachers, because there were such among the Jews; from thence it is argued that there should be a national church, a national sanhedrim or assembly, as was among the Jews; from thence it is argued that the power is in the elders alone, because it was so among the Jews, who

* Qu. 'were not all'?—ED.

are called the church. And so this analogy of the Jewish church is one of the great foundations of the presbyterian government, and of classical and national assemblies.

Ans. But besides that it was not necessary that Jesus Christ should allude to it, though he useth the same phrase; the deformity of that pattern, and the policy of the government of the New Testament, is such as that that cannot be Christ's intent.

For, 1, if we take the Jewish pattern in matter of government, we shall be worse put to it, to judge what is ceremonial and what is perpetual, or what was a judicial appendix to the ceremonial, and added upon a supposition of it, more than we are put to it to judge what was ordinary, and what was extraordinary in the apostles' practices. If that our Saviour Christ alluded to it in the gross and in the lump, who shall be able to distinguish?

2. If that policy should thereby be established, it would as well serve for the erecting of episcopal government over ministers; for although it is said that Aaron's high priesthood was Christ's type, and not the type of bishops, yet that the priests and the Levites (several companies of them) should have one that was the chief overseer over all,* who is by the Septuagint called Ἐπίσκοπος, bishop and overseer, was no way typical. There were four sorts of Levites: priests, Kohathites, Gershonites, Merarites, Num. iii. 30, 35; and over each of these were four eminent persons, whereof Eleazar was one, Num. iii. 32. And when Eleazar was made high priest, then Phinehas was governor of the Levites, and had oversight of them, ruling of them, as 1 Chron ix. 20, and Num. iv. 33. Ithamar was over the sons of Gershon and Merari. And in Neh. xi. 14, 22, they are called overseers, or, as the Septuagint translates it, Ἐπίσκοποι, bishops; the same word is used of the apostles, Acts i. 20, and their office, unto which (say the episcopal party) bishops do succeed as rulers over other ministers (though perhaps called bishops also), as the apostles were over the seventy, and all other ministers. And for this, will the Jewish pattern and policy (if that were alluded to) serve as well as for the presbyterian government. And in 2 Chron. xxxv. 8, we read of the three rulers of the house of God, whereof but one was the high priest. Now, although that the high priest, for his going into the holy of holies, was a type of Christ, yet not all those other that were the rulers of the priests and of the house of God.

And if it be replied, as it is by some, that this was but the law of nature, the heads of these families being rulers over the rest, it is answered,

1. So was not Korah, Num. xvi. 1.

2. The law of nature makes as well for one man to govern over many, and so for a monarchical government, as for an aristocratical; and so episcopal government might be argued to be suited to the law of nature as well as to the Jewish.

3. It belonged not to the ceremonial law, but it served only for order; and although the eldest of the family were those governors that were set over the rest of a company of priests of the same family, and so that the eldest had it by birth, and by the law of nature, yet that one should be set over the rest was merely a matter of order, and therefore will plead for itself as strongly (if we take the Jewish pattern) as for any other way of government.

It may be objected, that upon this ground, that one man makes not the church, episcopal power is cut off, and that therefore the allusion of our Lord Christ in Mat. xviii. is to those courts that were erected among the Jews.

Ans. 1. In the first place, either there were two sorts of courts, one civil, and the other purely ecclesiastical, two kind of Sanhedrims, both in each

* These were called the chief priests, Mat. ii. 4 and xxvii. 1, Acts xix. 4.

city, and in Jerusalem, which can never be proved; and if two, which of these two Christ should allude to will still be the question. Or if there were but one kind of court, that was both for civil and ecclesiastical government, then the Jewish pattern will not serve the turn, for then, by that reason, persons ecclesiastical now should deal in civil causes (for so they did then), and persons civil should deal in ecclesiastical. Yea, and those that hold there were two courts, the one for causes civil, the other for ecclesiastical, yet they say the persons in both were mixed. And because that both were thus mixed, therefore in Deut. xvii. 9, speaking of the Sanhedrim, he saith, 'When thou shalt come to the priest, or the judges, which shall be in those days,' &c.; for sometime a priest was the president of that council, and sometimes a civil person, that was not of the priest's office, whom therefore he calleth a judge. It was by institution that there should be some priests, Ezek. xliv. 24, Deut. xxiv. 8, 2 Chron. xviii. 18, Deut. xvi. 18; and also that others than priests and Levites were of the Sanhedrim, and also judges of particular cities, as all sides acknowledge. For from hence all presbyterian divines argue the pattern of lay elders, which yet, if there be not an institution for it in the New Testament, would never be able to be argued from hence; and therefore many of our brethren that acknowledge persons civil, that were not priests and Levites, to have been mingled in those courts, yet deny the consequence of that argument unto ruling elders now, which, if the Jewish pattern had held, it would have argued it. And it appears further, that therefore the elders and the priests are mentioned. Pharisees that were not of the tribe of Levi threw off* their rulers, and the priest or the judge, Deut. xvii.; and the judges, elders, and priests, are usually put together in their cities and courts.

And the reason why both were mixed thus, to become but one court, was because that then the church was mingled with the commonwealth, and both were but one; therefore the church of Israel is called the commonwealth of Israel. And the laws of their commonwealth were given immediately by God; and therefore the Levites, as well as the civil authority, were the interpreters of that law. If, therefore, this should now be the pattern, as when, according to our brethren's assertion, the church grows up to a nation, there should be a national church, because that was the pattern of the Jews, so when the churches grew up to a nation, the ecclesiastical state and the civil should become mingled, and ministers should judge in civil causes, and those that are not ministers should judge in ecclesiastical, for so in that Sanhedrim they did.

If it be said that all the acts were not church acts, as sending ambassadors, making wars, and the like, the answer is, that all such acts as were towards other nations might not so properly be called church acts, but the question is, what was among themselves? And yet even their wars were holy, and their God was called the Lord of hosts; and the priests wait† with trumpets, to encourage the people to fight, as if it had been an ecclesiastical business.

Ans. 2. Again, secondly, if that be the pattern that Christ alludeth to, then if that state had, whilst it stood in the apostles' times, turned Christian, it might have been conformed to the Jewish pattern of government as it then stood; and so the persons of the Sanhedrim, that were judges of the Jewish church, should have continued judges of the Christian church.

Ans. 3. If that the Jewish government had been the pattern, then there should be but two courts, subordinate one to another; for so there was no more among the Jews in a way of subordination. There was the court in

* Qu. 'though of'?—Ed. † Qu. 'went'?—Ed.

each city and town, consisting some of more, some of less, according to their proportion and bigness, that did judge of all causes within themselves; and then there was the great Sanhedrim, and appeals were made immediately from each of the inferior courts unto this superior. And whereas it is said by some that there were three courts at Jerusalem for appeals, we find not by the Scriptures that there were three such courts, although some of the rabbins say there were. And when the text saith, in Deut. xvii., that whosoever would not obey the sentence of the judge that should be in that place should be put to death; then when they brought it to the first court, the judges of the twenty-three at Jerusalem, according to that notion, they should have been put to death, and never have come to the great Sanhedrim. And if there were two such courts of the twenty-three, besides the Sanhedrim, yet they were not for appeals; but they were either the one of that city of Jerusalem, which as a city had the privilege to have a judicature within itself, besides the Sanhedrim for the whole nation; and the other of the priests for the matters of the temple (for the temple was an enclosure); or else the one was for Jerusalem, and the other for the city of David (each having the privilege of a city, although in two places, as Westminster and London have); the one was at the door of the mountain of the Lord, the other at the door of the temple. If, then, the form of the Jewish government be the pattern, then all those subordinate congregational, classical, provincial, and national assembles, they shall be cut off; for the Jewish pattern will not suit these.

4. If that were the pattern, then the national assembly should be the supreme judge, and there should be none above that; but over national assemblies, presbyterian divines do place an universal general council, and make that to be the supreme; whereas the national Sanhedrim of the Jews, *qua* national, was the highest court.

5. If that be the pattern, the matters brought to that Sanhedrim, so far as we have a rule in the word for it, were only matters that were too difficult; and when they were too difficult for those particular courts in the cities or towns, they were brought to the general assembly: Deut. xvii., 'If a matter be too hard for thee,' &c.; even as the hard matters, which none could determine but God, were brought to Moses, Exod. xviii. 21.

6. When the inferior court itself did find it to be too hard for them, it was not by way of appeal that they brought it to the superior; so in Deut. xvii., 'If it be too hard for thee.' So, as it was not in the liberty of any person to appeal, but the court, finding themselves not able to decide the controversy, they were to carry it to the Sanhedrim (therefore the rabbins say that that place, Deut. xvii., belongs only to a rebellious elder); and, if so, then this place will not serve to have ecclesiastical courts for appeals.

7. The Sanhedrim did only judge of the matter of the law and right in a doctrinal way in such and such a case; but it was still left, after their sentence, unto the inferior court to judge of the matter of fact, and to apply the sentence; so as by this rule the greater assemblies of synods and councils should not at all excommunicate, but only doctrinally deliver the sentence, still leaving to the particular churches the application of that rule, by the sentence of excommunication, in whose power alone it is. Therefore, speaking to the judges of the inferior courts, he says, 'Thou shalt do according to the sentence of the law, which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgments which they shall tell thee,' Deut. xvii. 10, 11.

8. The Sanhedrim executed civil punishments, as putting to death, &c., if their sentence was not obeyed; so that they excommunicated not, but punishment was civil, which their court inflicted.

9. If appeals were made, and things were carried to the higher courts from the lower, there was an high punishment for the neglecting of the sentence (supposing there were an appeal), merely because the sentence of that court was contemned. The man was to be put to death, although the matter wherein he disobeyed did deserve a lesser punishment. But in the ecclesiastical government that Christ hath set up, there is no higher punishment than excommunication and delivering to Satan; therefore this pattern will not serve.

10. In that Sanhedrim persons were still the same men, continually resident. They were officers on purpose that were set and constant for that church (even as bishops are amongst us), and they resided at Jerusalem. And so the foundation of the calling of the one to that national assembly, and the calling of ministers to our national assemblies (which they would pattern by this), do wholly differ; for ours are called by a new choice for that special assembly, as occasion is, and by a choice too, residing in their particular congregations and charges.

Obj. It is said, 2 Chron. xix. 8, 'They returned to Jerusalem.' It seems, therefore, they rode circuit.

Ans. That was occasional, when first religion was to be reformed, and the people instructed, after a neglect of all order and government amongst them. Otherwise they were constant at Jerusalem, and had therefore a peculiar title, being called 'elders of the people;' whereas others were called 'elders of the cities.' And so the pattern of bishops, who were constant officers for a national church, and attended wholly upon the public (as the same persons did always here in the high commission), will much better suit the Jewish pattern.

11. They had always a chief, whom they called the *nasi*, or the prince, in imitation of the first court, wherein Moses was chief, and the number with him, seventy-one; and so it is too, Ezek. viii. 11, seventy elders in the midst of them, Jaazaniah as the prince; and if the Jewish pattern should hold, there should be such now. Therefore, in Deut. xvii., the court, being denominated from some one, is called the priest or the judge; and it would, according to that, much better suit Rome than Zion, the popish government than that of the reformed churches; it being a nearer pattern to have one *nasi*, one prince, one high priest, with a constant number of cardinals, in a place which they pretend the promise is made to. And accordingly Bellarmine urgeth it for the state of antichrist, and with more reason and strength, and more likelihood, than for the presbyterian pattern; for the high priests were ordinarily over that Sanhedrim; so the Asmones in the time of the Maccabees, Mat. xxvi. 5–7, and Acts xxiii. 5, compared with Exod. xxii. 28.

12. There was a peculiar place which God did then sanctify at Jerusalem, in which the great Sanhedrim was always to sit. Therefore it is still said, in Deut. xvii., Thou shalt go to the place that God shall choose, as well as that they should go to the judge or to the priest, because it was God's promise to be in that place, and with the court sitting there; and therefore also it is said, 'If they should not do according to the sentence of the priest that standeth before the Lord.' And if they shew us any one place that God hath so peculiarly sanctified, and set up such a court, as the papists would pretend to do, then it would be a pattern, or else not. But God hath not sanctified any place now, therefore the pattern will not hold. It may much better, in a type, be transferred to the general assembly in heaven, even to which we under the gospel are come, or to the general judgment of the great day, when all causes shall be judged over again.

13. Neither were all causes ecclesiastical brought to this Sanhedrim; therefore it is said, 'Thou shalt bring all causes within thy gates,' not all

causes in God's house. Therefore the high priest is said to be over the house of God, and the charge of that house belonged unto the priests; and there were three rulers over the house of God. Therefore to the Sanhedrim belonged judicials, and such ceremonials as did not appertain to the temple, as the cutting off of a man that had leaven in his house, Exod. xii. But yet the ceremonial belonged to the temple, and the priests themselves were judges thereof. And the order of priests and Levites had a peculiar power to judge of leprosy, and of persons that were unclean, and to keep them out of the temple, Levit. x. 10, 11; Ezek. xliv. 23; Hag. ii. 11–13. Therefore the priests of the temple put out Uzziah when he was struck with the leprosy. So Christ answerably speaks: Mat. viii. 4, 'Go shew thyself to the priest,' saith Christ to the man that he cured of the leprosy, that he might judge of it whether he were whole or no. Neither were there any persons that we read of, but those that were priests, that were to do this. Yea, the leprosy was so infectious, that there was no warrant or promise that any that conversed with or came to a leper should be kept from it, but only the priest; and in Num. iii. 7, they were to keep the whole charge about the tabernacle of the congregation; and in Ezek. xliv. 27, they were to look to the Sabbath. Now it is evident that others besides the priests made up that great court at Jerusalem.

14. If that this were the pattern, then the church in each village or city now should have an immediate and entire government within themselves; and so it would suit the congregational government. For each town in Judea had elders in their gates: in the smaller, there were three to judge their causes; in the greater cities, there were twenty-three.

15. The number of the persons were all set, they were seventy; so that in the conclusion we may say, as Paul of those of the circumcision, and observing the law, that they themselves keep not the law, so nor those that are for the analogy of the Jewish pattern here; being these so great, so essential, and many differences between the Jewish and presbyterial government as to a national assembly.

And if it be said by them, We urge not the identity, that it should be the same; we reply, 1, Why not the identity in things that were not ceremonial (for such they pretend to make a pattern), but matters of mere order and policy, suited to them as to a national church, and that by God's institution? If they make the institution of God the pattern in one thing, why not in another? 2. If it be only a mere analogy, they themselves must shew some other warrant, first, for the like things instituted anew by Christ under the New Testament, which, being so instituted, doth bear analogy with what was under the Old. For otherwise it is left unto the pleasure of man to take and refuse what he pleaseth, and set it up as analogous to the old; and so others may set up other things, and indeed pick another form of government out of other things that were analogous to the government of that pattern. As when they argue out of Mat. xviii. that Christ alludeth to the courts that were then in Jewry, where he saith, 'Go tell the church,' and urge the analogy to hold in this, that as their courts, which were called *ecclesiæ*, were a college of elders and judges, and that, therefore, the church that Christ means under the New Testament must be a consistory of elders and national assemblies, as the lesser and greater Sanhedrim was distinct and apart from the people, we have just reason to reply, Why should the analogy hold in this only, unless the New Testamant hold forth that the assembly of a company of elders, apart from the people, are called a church? If that were first found, then, indeed, this analogy might be applied thereunto; but to pick and choose out one piece of the model, and leave out the

rest, and to say that Christ intends this rather than the rest, without a special warrant of his so to do, is but human and arbitrary, under the colour of divine institution.

To us this is an infallible rule, that where God hath applied a type or anything out of the Old Testament to an institution under the New, we should so far be led by it as he hath in this or that particular applied it, for otherwise the analogy of those chief priests which are called ἐπίσκοποι, *overseers*, as the Septuagint rendereth it, Ps. cix. 8, Acts i. 20, Zech. xi. 14, 22, would hold for the order of bishops by way of analogy, as strong as any argument can be framed from the analogy of their courts to the like ecclesiastical now.

It is urged by some, that that which belonged to that church, as a church, is moral in all ages, as that which belongs to a child, as he is *animal rationale*, belongs to a man, though what agreeth to him as a child agrees not to all men, but what agrees to a child, as it is *animal rationale*, is common to all men. Now this church, say they, did not belong to the church as Jewish, and as in its infant condition in a typical respect, but as a politic national church.

We answer, 1, that their being a national church was in a typical respect, and therefore all their laws, ceremonial, judicial, moral, the laws that were given the state, were given by God. *Jus civile Judaicum pars theologiæ fuit*, the Jews' civil law was part of their divinity; and therefore the commonwealth of Israel is called the church; and in 2 Peter i., Peter, speaking to the saints, saith, applying the type, you are 'a holy nation, a royal people.' He speaks not to them as they were a nation under a government, one national church, although he writes to the Jews that were dispersed over many provinces, 1 Peter i. 1. *Totus status illius populi fuit figuralis* (Aquinas, prima secundæ, quæst. 104, art. 2).

Yea, 2, that great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem seems to have a typical respect upon it, it being restrained to the place that God should choose, and was a type of the general assembly in heaven, or at the day of judgment, for to that assembly doth Christ seem to allude when he saith they shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem was only that court that did judge the twelve tribes, and no other court besides.

3. There was that peculiar ground of the Jews being a national church, which was the main ground why God made them a national church, as is compatible to no nation under heaven; they were a national church, not only as men living under the same government, and under the same prince, and in the same land, or of the same language, but chiefly and principally as they were the children of Abraham, to whom the promises were made as to one common father, whose seed did grow up into a nation, whom God did sever from all other nations as such, and made a nation of them dwelling alone, so as they were not to marry out of their own nation. And herein Abraham was Christ's type, Jesus Christ being now the Father of all the faithful in all nations, who are become one royal nation unto him, but a royal nation spiritually, and a royal kindred, although out of several nations, but not as formed into a national government. And when they did grow up into a nation, then God gave them laws for the government of them as a nation, God did institute them to a national church and kingdom, and made a new covenant with them, and gave them laws. And if now, under the gospel, we should come to a national church and have a like government, it may have an institution under the New Testament as that had then.

And there is likewise this difference between our churches under the gospel and that of the Jews, that the *prima notio*, the first notion of a church,

fell upon them as they were a nation, but now doth not fall upon the saints as they are a nation in that sense that they were; but it falls either upon the church universal, which is the church mystical, or upon congregational, but upon none, *qua* nation, as it did upon them; and therefore, their being a national church was a type of the universal, and not of this or that particular nation now, *qua* nation; but we can shew too, that, *qua* nation, they were the type of particular churches and congregations.

5. There is a great fallacy in this argument. It is true, that that which agreeth to a church, *qua talis, as such*, is in every church that is such; and so what was in that church as national, purely so considered, may be and ought to be in any other church that is national in a political respect, as whatsoever belongeth to a man *qua rationalis*, belongeth to every man. When, therefore, it is said this government did belong to it *qua* church, so we deny it, for it belonged only to it *qua* national church in the general, and hath many specifical differences annexed. There is a church national, such indeed was the Jews; and there is a church congregational, and such are those under the New Testament; there is a church universal, which is the church mystical. But what belongs to the church of the Jews as national and cast into a kingdom, will not belong to the church universal, nor will it belong to the church congregational, for it belongs to it only as national; and so we might as well argue, that what belongs to one *species* under a *genus*, belongs to the other *species;* or that what belongs to a man *qua animal rationale*, should belong to a beast because he also is *animal*. So that this remaineth first to be proved, that Jesus Christ hath made national churches under the New Testament to be politic bodies, and then the argument might have some show in it, that what belongs to a church as a national church, should belong to a national church under the New Testament for matter of government. But otherwise, it may as well be argued, that what form of government agrees to a kingdom as a body politic, must be found in every corporation, and that the same government must be in the one that is in the other; whereas a body politic is the *genus*, as also *church* is, and *national*, *presbyterial*, &c., are but specifical differences annexed, and also that what belongs to the commonwealth of Venice as an aristocratical commonwealth must belong to all commonwealths; whereas there are commonwealths that are monarchical, which we call kingdoms, others that are democratical, and what belongs to the one, with these differences, belongs not to the other. What belongs simply to a monarchy as a monarchical commonwealth, must not be said to belong to a democratical commonwealth. In a monarchy there are differing degrees of marquesses, and earls, and lords; it will not therefore follow, that in a democracy, or in a commonwealth whose government is by several Hanse towns, there should be the same too.

6. And if Christ had appointed national churches under the New Testament in a political respect, it was not necessary that the analogy of the Jewish government should be observed; no more than that, in every kingdom and commonwealth, the analogy of the Jews' political government should also be observed. And the analogy, too, might be kept and observed in its proportion in every congregational church, as the analogy of the three estates in the superior court in parliament is shadowed out in many corporations, where there is the mayor, aldermen, and common council; but it is not necessary that there should be the same subordination of courts, all keeping the same analogy as was amongst the Jews; for churches depending immediately upon the magistrates in every kingdom might be well governed, as we see the church in Geneva is, and the Helvetians are. But we answer,

7. Whereas the argument runs that that government was not ceremonial,

suppose that their having such a form of government with courts of appeals, having judicature in them, were not typical and ceremonial, yet it will not follow that the like must be in the churches in nations under the gospel; therefore Gersom Bucerus* distinguisheth that some things were merely ceremonial, and they were cut off; other things were perpetually moral, and other things, though they were not ceremonial, yet they did peculiarly serve to the conservation of that policy, and were annexed for order's sake to the preservation of what was ceremonial. Now, that national sanhedrim was of that latter sort; for suppose it were not ceremonial altogether, yet that church being constituted a national church as a politic body ecclesiastical, it must have a national sanhedrim that was suitable and answerable; for, if we suppose a national church, it must have a national government proportionable to it, and officers accordingly; and so that there should be those heads of the priests, and that imparity accordingly amongst the priests, was a thing proper to the policy of the Levites, and yet not typical; for multitudes of them meeting in their ranks and courses for the service of the temple, it was necessary that there should be one that should order those multitudes of them that in their courses came up.

It must be acknowledged, that whatever constitution of churches as politic bodies Jesus Christ hath made, he hath took a suitable order for the preservation of order among them; so, having made congregational churches those politic bodies, he hath taken order for the government of them as such. And if he had made churches national, as politic bodies, he would have took suitable order for them also, as he did among the Jews, and he would have done it afore such time as churches were multiplied, so as to come up to a nation, for so he did with the church of the Jews afore they came into the land of Canaan; but so he hath not done in the New Testament, nor did the apostles live to see it settled; and it were strange that that form should be erected by Christ that the apostles lived not to see.

So that the conclusion of all it must be this, that Jesus Christ did still suit the government of his church to the condition of the matter. Thus the church, when in families, had a family government, and when a nation was singled out and chosen, it had a national government; but the saints being to be dispersed over all nations (as the Jews themselves were when they had their synagogues dispersed), he hath established a government answerable.

A church is said to be national, either, 1, in respect of the members, that all that are of the nation are members of the church, which was the constitution of the Jewish church; or, 2, in respect of government, that, because they are a nation, they are cast therefore into a national government. Now, indeed, the national government of the Jews did follow upon their national constitution of members, and answerably under the gospel, even in nations, the government of Christ's church doth follow the condition of the members. Now, the condition of those that are saints (which are only fit to be members of churches) is to be scattered up and down, and to be few, for they are redeemed out of nations. There are few cities in England will afford more saints than will make one church, but London. So as the reason why that under the gospel, there is not this national government for churches, is because a nation comes not up to Christ's terms; and if it should, there are other respects that make the alteration; for it was fit that the body of the saints, the people, should have interest of presence and of a virtual concurrence, and of edification, yea, of suffrage in the government. It was for the honour of the saints that are come out of their nonage that it should be so,

* De Guber. Eccl. p. 51.

and that worship and government, and communion in both, should be commensurable, God loving more the spiritual communion that saints have in public worship under the gospel than the national sacrifices under the old law, and did therefore cast the government under the gospel thus to attain this end, without which it could not be attained, and also because that churches, as churches, would be more sweetly ordered by the law of communion of churches without jurisdiction, than by a jurisdiction placed in combination of many churches over each, seeing that government could not be transacted in the presence of the saints, but by delegated messengers and representative elders.

CHAPTER IV.

Whether a fixed and constant assembly of presbyters or elders have a right of authority over particular congregations.—The question stated.

Though those who have stood up and written for the presbyterial government (as it is practised in the reformed churches), do assert it to be the only ordinary standing and perpetual government which ought to be embraced in all churches and Christian states, yet the wisdom of the assembly of divines at Westminster thought meet to propound it to this debate, that the Scripture holds forth *it may be*.

And whereas, when the asserting the *jus divinum* of it is waived, that yet it is a government the nearest, and in a conspicuous eminency most conformed to the Scripture rules and examples in the New Testament, is a position in succession the next, though a far lower step than the former. And less could not have been expected to have been held forth, when all other governments are laid aside, to give room for its entertainment. Yet this first and leading proposition to all the other that follow about it, viz., that the Scripture intimates that such a government may be, falls as low in its undertaking as any government that can be supposed to pretend the least for itself. And in the like manner the rest of the propositions that follow run but in the same style, that it is lawful and agreeable to the word that things should be ordered thus or thus.

Though the reverend assembly would not venture so far, yet the next fairest way left for deciding this controversy had been to have patterned the practices and directions which the several ways of church government pretend to for their warrant, and to have compared these each with the other, and by an harmonious draught and platform of either, when set together, it would easily have been discerned, not only which of them *may be*, but which of them rather *should be ;* and that of the two which appeared to hold the greatest likeness to the primitive picture, drawn in the stories of the New Testament, and in the rules and commands in the epistles similar thereunto, let that have been esteemed the true child there. But the proposition is so cast that we must directly oppose it with such grounds as may shew that this presbyterian may not be, without troubling ourselves to consider which of the forms of government this should be.

The proposition as thus stated for the dispute upon a mere *it may be*, as it allows the greatest latitude and compass to the affirmers of it for their way of defending it, and paves the way for passableness with all men, of all sides whatever, whose judgments are not bound up with the opinion of a *jus divinum* in church government, so it did put the greatest difficulty upon those that were negative in judgment to disprove it. The difficulty lay in

this, that the most direct and punctual way to overthrow the proposition is first to prove and make good this other more general assertion, so much controverted, that there is a certain standing ordinary form of church government held forth in the directions given to the apostles, or the examples of those churches we read of in the Scripture erected by their guidance, and that also seconded by this negative, that there ought to be no other than what is by institution. Which two general principles, if supposed or gained, then indeed this alone had been argument sufficient to disprove the presbyterial government, that if it be not held forth in the Scriptures as the ordinary standing government for the churches, that then it may not be. These aforesaid general propositions having been determined, there needed no more words to have been on the opponent's part, but to examine the assembly's proofs, whether therein there appeared this standing government instituted. But the discussion of the general propositions was denied by the assembly (in the very first entrance into the dispute of discipline) to be so much as debated, and therefore could not be assumed here nor anywhere else into any debate, but against the former order of the assembly; so that they stood upon this advantage, to maintain their assertion upon Erastian principles, and yet left us to disprove it upon the contrary principles, which yet are common to them and us, and which (as one said when it was laid aside) would require a quarter of a year's debate, and also would have been left wholly upon us to make good, although it be laid as the foundation by the church of Scotland and other reformed churches of the presbyterial government, and made use of against the episcopal to prove that the government of the church by bishops may not be.

And whereas it may be said that yet this was left us, that by proving the congregational way to be by institution, we might by that, as another medium, have shewed that the presbyterial government may not be, we were in this disadvantaged also (if we would have introduced the debate thereof as against the proposition), that though we had never so sufficiently proved all (that is, a complete government) to be in a congregation by Christ's institution; and yet for this demonstration of that (as our brethren full well know), it had been necessary to debate and discuss at large, first, that fore-mentioned principle, by what ways the institutions of Christ in the New Testament are held forth, whether in ordinary examples and practices of the primitive churches, yet that had been (as to our brethren) an insufficient argument to disprove this proposition, that therefore a presbyterial government over many congregations may not be. And the consequence would have been denied by many of our brethren that hold all power of government to be in a congregation, but not solely or only; and so a classical government over many congregations may yet be. And, therefore, to have overthrown their assertion, there were two propositions yet more necessary to have been proved by us, or the proof had not been sufficient as to them: first, that an ecclesiastical government may not be set up (unless warranted by institution) over many congregations that have it by institution within themselves; or, secondly, that the Scriptures do not hold forth by institution an ecclesiastical government in classes, &c., over many congregations. One of these, or both, must have been proved by us. If the first, we should fall again into a new general head about institutions, namely, that what in church government is not by institution, may not be. The latter, we also saw, the assembly did decline, and stated their assertion upon an *it may be;* and then, again, this latter also being a negative, the demonstration lies not in positive arguments to the contrary, but in a defensive denial, with answers to the arguments which

might be brought to prove the affirmative. And our brethren not undertaking to prove an institution of the presbyterial government, all our answers to their arguments had answerably still fallen short of disproving the institution of that government; so that our attempt this way to oppose their proposition would have been unavailable and in vain.

But this was not all the obstruction that lay in our way to the confuting this proposition, in respect of this their stating it upon an *it may be;* but the difficulty was increased further also, and yet no less from the vast indefiniteness and indeterminate ambiguity and uncertainty of that other term, *presbyterial government over many congregations*, which, importing an association of the elders of many congregations for government, doth admit many variations, and includes in it several patterns of government, and also differing constitutions of those congregations. For (to give an instance) there might be conceived a twofold presbytery or association of elders over many congregations. There might be one for the ordinary and standing government thereof, so as the greatest matters appertaining to any of those congregations should be in a constant way brought before their consistory as belonging to their jurisdiction; so as the congregations and their several elderships should not proceed but as first warranted by the sentence of the higher presbytery. And there might be another presbytery or meeting of elders (and the assembly had not declared any difference between synodical and presbyterial assemblies set for a standing government), but only in case that schisms and contentions fall out in the several congregations, either about matters of doctrine or government, or for difficult cases, which the several elderships of the congregations do find too hard for them, and so seek their help and direction; or otherwise, when the eldership of a particular congregation hath scandalously managed their government, or wrongfully excommunicated, &c., then the neighbouring elderships offended, or appealed unto by the persons offended, are to judge and determine of it. This is the first and most general division of the presbyterial government, into which, as it is propounded in the *may be*, it can be cast. If it be limited to an ordinary and standing government, yet still as great an ambiguity as the former remains touching the several ways, sorts, or kinds into which this presbyterial government, and the constitution of these congregations, may be and are cast in the reformed churches, arising from a differing relation that the elders (that thus are to make a common standing presbytery) do bear unto these congregations.

1. The one is common and promiscuous, unfixed for all sorts of duties, of preaching, &c., as well as for ruling; that as in common they make one presbytery over them all for government, so likewise they all are alike elders and pastors to each congregation, and do bestow like pains and care for all pastoral duties of preaching, feeding, &c., in their courses and rounds, as is practised in some cities in Holland.

2. A second variety is, that they are a presbytery unto all in common for acts of discipline, yet they are pastors or elders fixed in their relations properly but to one congregation, to perform all such duties thereunto, and not unto the rest.

In the first, the ministers of all these congregations do, in a circular way, preach to them all in their course, as well as they do rule in common; as if three or four parishes be together, the ministers of each should in their turns feed them all, and the people partake of the gifts and graces of all, as well as the ministers rule all. Now, if these congregations, for the number of the persons belonging to them, consist only of so many as can at times meet altogether, with their common elderships, for matters of discipline,

choice of ministers, admonitions, and excommunications, and can be all present upon such great and solemn acts of government, in which we conceive all are interested, so to join in them, and to be edified by them, although, in respect of convenience, they make several set and fixed congregations for worship, either on the account of persecution, or of distance from each other, or the like; and if they are so few congregations, and so near as that elders, that make up an eldership in common, can fulfil the duties of the relation of pastors to them all in their round and course, so as those congregations do partake of the gifts and graces of them all, as well as are ruled by them all, this kind of presbytery of elders in common over such a number as can and do for their great acts of government, meet in one assembly upon such occasions, both people and elders altogether make up one kind of government and constitution of congregations. But when there are presbyteries, that either through their extent and compass of the number and distance of the congregations under them, or otherwise by the law of their combination, neither do nor can hold the relation, nor discharge the duties of pastors in common unto them, but do only and merely rule them (and so do, in respect to this, make a greater presbytery over their many lesser congregations, and this for the ordinary government of them), and when the members of these congregations cannot meet to be present at the acts of discipline (wherein they have an interest of presence and edification), this is a second sort of presbyterial government, and which is generally practised in the reformed churches.

3. And again, yet further, this latter may also be (in rational supposition) cast into two sorts of government.

The first sort of government is wherein the elders of these many congregations have no share of government in public admonitions or censures, nor bear no rule in those congregations they are respectively affixed to, but such as under the bishops, the pastors of the congregations had, of preaching, private watching, visiting the sick; all suspensions from the sacrament, public admonitions, censures, being immediately to be brought to the common presbytery of elders, set over them all for government.

2. Another form of government is, that many congregations (as in Scotland), having their proper and peculiar pastors and elders, hereby come to be so many formed and distinct churches, for the relation of a pastor and other elders or rulers cannot but be unto a church properly so called, for church and elders are relative, as rulers and a commonwealth; and therefore they are called *ecclesiæ primæ*, as those to whom the notion and true nature and state of a church doth first belong. And further, these officers, and pastors, and teachers, being first in these several churches, and there being in each some competent number of elders or officers, as a pastor or teacher, with other ruling elders (for otherwise the greater presbytery should not be made up complete of some of all these sorts of officers out of each church, since the first seat of all these officers is some particular church), these pastors and ruling elders do make up a presbytery over each of these churches respectively. And further, being thus particular churches, or having a presbytery or eldership, they have some, yea, and a great part of government allotted to them within their several churches, as suspension from the sacrament, public admonitions, &c.

For to suppose them churches, and to have elderships over them, and to have no privilege of governing, would be to make an empty title, without any of those things the Scripture gives to the churches and their elderships. There is only this difference, that when it comes to the great matters of ordination or excommunication, these are taken up to the great presbytery; and

thus within the territory of this presbyterial government intended in the proposition, two sorts of elderships are to be understood as included, lesser, and greater ones over them, and two sorts of churches (though called only congregations), churches lesser and incomplete, joined to make one church, as the subject of the common presbyterial government.

In these unlimited and incomprehensive senses was this proposition (the first-born of all that follow about this government) propounded to the debate, although we urged upon the assembly that they would specify and determine which of these governments they intended and would maintain ; but it would not be granted, nor anything added for the limitation thereof, as *must be*, nor *rather be*, instead of *it may be*, not *over many churches* instead of *many congregations* ; the advantage of which on their part was a liberty to defend it in any of these senses, and each upon the lowest terms, *it may be;* for the proposition might vary and alter with any of these shapes for its defence ; as if a standing government immediately over many congregations could not be defended, then extraordinary and mediate of elders associated in synods might. If the common standing government of fixed elders to their several congregations would not abide the touch, then still the proposition (they might say) is not confuted, for presbytery of promiscuous unfixed elders might notwithstanding be true, and so the truth of the proposition would stand.

Being reduced to this narrowness in the entrance into the debate, both for the state of the question, and for the medium of arguing, we (1) profess to lay our arguments against that way of presbyterial government over many congregations, as it is extant, or practised in the church of Scotland over many congregations, having elders fixed to them ; and we did also desire that no other answers might be given, but such as they would, in rearing up the presbyterial government, reduce to practice ; and, 2, for the medium of arguing, we had little else left us to have in a direct and open way recourse unto, but those exhortations and charges given to elders in the epistles of the apostles, as lying apparently cross to this way of presbyterial government, as thwarting the rule of Christ and directions of the apostles.

The state of the question then is this :

1. By government is meant a standing, ordinary, and constant government, exercised over many congregations, in all the matters of greatest moment that concern any persons therein.

2. These congregations are such, and so continued, as to have severally or apart each their proper elders affixed to them, to preach to them and watch over them, and to be interested in lesser cases of government, as admonition, &c.

3. But it is questioned whether for all cases of government that are the greater, as excommunication, &c., that shall fall out in any of those congregations, those elders in common, meeting in one great presbytery or eldership, and made up of them all (even as for lesser matters, the elders of particular congregations meeting are lesser presbyteries to their several congregations respectively) should not appropriate this greater government to themselves, which we deny, and shall endeavour to refute in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V.

That if a presbytery of elders be elected, having power over many congregations, besides their general relation, they would also bear a particular relation to each congregation.

That no company of elders assembled together hath a power and rule over many congregations, will appear if we do but consider what the New Testament declares concerning elders in their relations to their flocks committed to them, and concerning the exhortations and charges to them, of duties towards those flocks founded upon that relation, as also the duties of their flocks to them; all which is like to be the surest measure to find out the extent of their power and bounds of their flocks, and whether that power for the ordinary way be limited to one congregation or many. For those exhortations and charges must needs be supposed suited to that boundary of churches, and that constitution and extent of relation, that the elders of those primitive times were placed in over them; likeas in the question about polygamy, what the Scripture hath said of the duties between man and wife, which were given and suited to the extent of that relation, as God from the beginning bounded it, manifestly evinceth that one man cannot have many wives, but one.

We have hitherto taken this for an undoubted maxim, that as a mutual relation is the ordinary foundation of all power, whether economical, civil, or ecclesiastical, so the extent of all power is commensurable with the extent of that relation. A master, as a master, hath power but over such servants of whom he may say, I am your master, and they of him, We are your servants; for what hath any man to do to judge another man's servant? as the apostle saith. And the same is true correspondently here. Those elders that assume to be over either one or many congregations, must have, as the office of elders, so the relation of elders unto that one, or those many, congregations, that they may be able to say, We are your elders, and you are our church; which two are in Scripture expression the *relate* and the *correlate*, as king and kingdom, magistrates and commonwealth.

Now, against this standing government of these elders in greater presbyteries (as the question hath been stated), we shall humbly make use of the fore-mentioned maxim for a medium to overthrow this government, by presenting together therewith the incongruities and inconsistencies of it, and also by arguing what the New Testament speaks of the elders and their duties in relation to the flocks committed to them, which all do argue that according to the Scriptures such a government *may not be*. And we frame our argument thus.

If many congregations, having all elders already fixed respectively unto them, may be under such a standing presbyterial government, then all those elders must also (according to the Scriptures) sustain a special relation of ordinary and standing elders to all the people of those congregations, as one church their flock, and to every one as a member thereof.

But for a company of such elders already affixed, &c., to sustain such a relation, carries with it so great and manifold incongruities and inconsistencies with what the Scripture speaks of elders in their relation to a flock or church committed to them, and likewise with the principles of the reformed churches themselves, as cannot be admitted, and therefore such a government may not be.

That according to the Scriptures such a standing presbyterial government

necessarily draws such a standing special relation, we endeavour to evince by parts, thus.

1. They must have the relation of elders, for church and elders are relatives. And the argument for the presbyterial government is taken by the presbyterial divines from this, that many congregations in Scripture are made one church, and the elders thereof elders of that church. This we had the greatest reason to take for granted from the former writings and expressions of the presbyterial divines; yea, the main arguments by which themselves have proved this government, have been taken from this, that many congregations in the New Testament do make one church, and the elders thereof elders of that one church, and therefore are to govern that church. And this we have the greatest reason to take for granted still, for in the proof which was presented to the honourable houses of parliament by the reverend assembly (and before we entered into the debate was brought in by the committee in the instance of the church of Jerusalem), this is one medium, that mention is made of multitudes there as of one church, and of elders as the elders of that church. Yea, and there being no mention made of any distinct particular congregations or churches therein, but of a church, and the elders thereof, as thereby the prime notion of a church is held forth and attributed thereto, so the prime and more principal relation of elders, as elders to this one church, and every member of them, is imported, and so as true and as genuine a relation (according to the Scripture's intent and expression) must be supposed to be intended, as can be supposed between any particular congregation and their elders. Yea, and moreover, to make out the presbyterial government over those many congregations, as one church, whilst the apostles were the rulers of it, the apostles themselves are made to act and become as ordinary elders to that church. It was therefore desired that they who should deny this proposition would raze out of their writings for ever all such expressions; and that in the proofs after to be brought to establish the presbytery, they would forbear that medium, which yet, as a main stud in this building, cannot be wanting.

2. This relation, which these elders have, must be a more special relation, as is evident from the practice and principles of this government. For when the congregations in shires are divided into several presbyteries or deaneries, the elders (though neighbours) of a bordering presbytery intermeddle not with the congregations under another presbytery, and yet they are for their office elders. It is therefore a special relation puts the difference, that those of these presbyteries judge the congregations under them, as having a special relation to them, such as not to other congregations. So the elders of the church of Jerusalem, as they all had the relation of elders to that church, so they had a special relation to that church; and the church was an entire distinct church within itself from the rest of the churches in Judea, and the elders of that church were in such a special manner elders thereof as of no church else in Judea; yea, in such a sense as they might be said not to be elders of those other churches, but of this.

3. It is an ordinary standing relation; for they exercise and assume a constant and ordinary power, as the presbyters of lesser congregations do. Their meetings as elders in a presbytery are constant and ordinary, as those of the lesser presbyteries are; and as these are established for the smaller matters of government, so these always are for the greater and most solemn, and they are both alike ordinary; for their meeting, work, and exercise of power being standing, their relation must be suitable and answerable to that of elders in their congregations respectively.

Unto the argument several answers were given by the reverend respon-

dents. 1. Some said that they meet not *qua* elders, only *qui;* they meet as commissioners, but not as elders. But this answer is taken away by the first and second argument, which proves they have the relation of elders in ruling. 2. It was denied by others, that if they make up a presbytery to these congregations, and all the people of them, that then they must bear the relation of elders to these congregations, and every member of them; for though they are elders taken singly and apart, as in relation to their several congregations which they are affixed unto; yet in this their conjunction into a common presbytery over them all, they bear not the relation of elders, but of a presbytery or eldership acting all in common. For as all these congregations, under this government, are to be considered as one body, and as making up one church, so all these elders, met in this community, are to be considered as one body and community; and therefore, although they be considered altogether a presbytery to that whole church, yet it follows not that they bear the relation of elders to each congregation or person they govern; for accord- to that logic rule, *quod convenit toti* qua *toti*, *non convenit cuilibet parti*, what agrees to the whole, as a whole, doth not agree to every part. These elders, as in a presbytery, make one *totum aggregatum;* and these congregations, as making up one church, make another *totum aggregatum* correlative thereunto; but take any elder out of this presbytery, and consider him in a single relation to any of those churches under the presbytery, and he is not an elder of any of those churches, no more than if you take any member of all those congregations that make up a classical church, it would follow that therefore he is a member of all those many congregations, whereas he is only a member of that community as making one church. And it was exemplified thus, that in Judah the heads of the tribes governed the tribes, but so as the heads of the tribe of Benjamin were not the heads of the tribe of Manasseh; and so in the university, the particular heads of Trinity College and of Queen's College are altogether heads of the university as a common body, but it follows not that the head of Trinity College is head of Queen's and of all other colleges. And so in parliament, a burgess of Warwickshire acts for all England, yet it follows not he is a burgess of Norfolk; so the case is here, they are elders *in sensu composito*, as united into one presbytery or community, but not *in sensu diviso*, to each of these congregations, but each to their proper congregations to which they are affixed; as the colonels in an army are colonels but to their several regiments, yet they all join in one body as a council of war to the whole army. And so these are elders here *in sensu aggregato*, collectively to all the congregations, though apart with a more special relation to each. It was retorted also that in a particular congregation, according to our principles, the community of all the brethren have power over any particular member, as Thomas and Peter, with the rest, over John; but it follows not that Peter hath power over John apart, but only as in this community considered; and so in this presbytery, all these elders are a presbytery to the whole, but yet bear not the relation of elders to each apart considered. But we answer,

1. That we had the greatest reason to take it for granted (from the former writings and expressions of the presbyterial divines, as also because the main arguments, by which themselves had proved this government, have been taken from it), that many congregations in the New Testament do make up one church, and that the elders thereof are elders of that one church, and therefore they are to govern that church.

2. That logical axiom is indeed true, *quod convenit toti*, qua *toti*, *non convenit cuilibet parti;* and so here, that which doth *competere toti*, to the whole of those elders, belongs not to every part; for take them all as met together,

they are a presbytery, and accordingly each elder is not a presbytery to all these congregations. Nor doth the argument suppose it, but only that if they all be a common presbytery to all these congregations, that then they bear the relation of elders to them. Thus in a particular congregation, though all the elders are acknowledged by all to be elders to every member of the congregation, yet each cannot be said to be a presbytery to the whole or each member; for that which belongs to the whole as the whole, belongs not to every part. That indeed which belongs to an aggregate whole, or collective community, formally considered as such, cannot be attributed to every part; but what materially belongs to them, belongs to each apart. As take an heap of stones, it is true each stone is not an heap of stones, but each stone is a stone; and both the stones apart and as an heap may be said to be such or such a man's propriety, and to relate to him; so this company of elders must be supposed both a presbytery and also elders to this whole people, and every member of them.

3. If they be a presbytery in common to those congregations, then according to the Scripture notion and expression (and what the Scriptures hold forth is the subject-matter of this debate), they bear the relation of elders also; and then they must be such elders as the exhortations and duties of elders mentioned do concern. Now, this consequence we make good by these arguments.

(1.) The Scriptures would have the people look at them, and honour them as elders in all acts of ruling and governing, those especially wherein the most and chief of government lies, and wherein the excellency of their ruling is seen. Now the chief of the acts of government, and the most excellent thereof, are assumed and exercised by these elders, met in a common presbytery, as excommunication, &c. And therefore they that exercise such acts of government over congregations, must bear the relation of elders to them; for upon that relation we are to honour them as performing this rule, and under that relation they must be said to perform it: 'The elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and doctrine,' 1 Tim. v. 17. From whom are they to have this honour given them, but from the people under them, and to be honoured in their relation; and this as well in ruling as in preaching, though an *especially* is put upon that. And therefore, if in giving this honour to them that labour in preaching to them, they are to look at them, under the relation of elders, and their elders labouring in the word to them, then, in giving that honour to them that rule them, they are so to look upon them, and therefore they must sustain that relation in that ruling; and besides, otherwise we destroy the relation of elders as elders in the highest acts of governing, which are exercised in a presbytery, whereas the apostle calls them elders in ruling as well as in preaching.

(2.) The New Testament doth indifferently and promiscuously use the word *presbytery* and the word *elders* of the same persons, in relation to the same people; and therefore to whom the elders are supposed to be a presbytery, to them they must bear the relation of elders. That the phrase is promiscuously used, is evident by Mat. xxi. 33, where those that are called 'elders of the people' are called, Luke xxii. 66, τὸ πρεσβυτέριον τοῦ λάου, 'the presbytery of the people,' so that if they were related as a presbytery to the people, to the same people they were related as elders. Neither are they said to be elders in relation to their being a presbytery, but to the people; therefore it is not said the elders of the presbytery, but of the people, as bearing a direct relation as elders to the people; and so in analogy thereunto, if they be a presbytery to many congregations, they must be supposed elders of those

congregations; for to whomever they are a presbytery, to them they are elders; and to whomever they are elders, to them upon occasion they are a presbytery. And in analogy, the New Testament useth the word *presbytery* as under the gospel but once, and in all places else, the Holy Ghost still, when he exhorts them to their duties, calls them elders, or them 'that have the rule over you;' and yet, in all those places, he intends to involve the duty of elders as met in a presbytery, as well as those singly performed to each person.

(3.) It is evident from the like parallel instance of the eldership of a particular congregation, where the elders bear the relation of elders to each member, and when met in common, they are an eldership or presbytery in common to that church, and each member of it. And then this their being a community takes not away their relation of being elders, as, if the answer given by the respondents should hold, it would; for they would only be a presbytery, and not elders in that community, whenas they never are elders more than then, and are not elders of that church, because met in a presbytery, but therefore meet in a presbytery over that congregation, because they personally bear the relation of elders to it; and when they meet in that presbytery, they are elders particularly to each member, as well as are universal elders in the assembled presbytery. The Scripture commits the care of churches to these as in a presbytery, as well as out of it; and therefore they are elders of their particular flock in this presbytery, as well as when out of it. Thus (Acts xx. 28) all the care of the flock was committed to them as elders, and having relation to it as such; and therefore when met in a presbytery (therein to have care of the flock, or any member of it) they were elders to it. And they are therefore to meet in a presbytery, because they were first elders to their several respective congregations; and that they must be acknowledged elders of all the people in those congregations, the very instance itself alleged by our brethren will evidently clear; for the general elders of all the tribes were called elders of the people, Mat. xxi. So as suppose the same individual persons had been members of the general sanhedrim, or common eldership of the people, and also elders of the tribes respectively, yet they might as justly be called elders of all those tribes in their general relation, for such ends and purposes, as truly as they were elders to their particular tribes, for other ends and purposes. Now, therefore, by like reason must all the elders in this common presbytery have the relation of elders to all the congregations, as well as severally they have their proper relations to their several congregations. For if, in the instance given of the Jewish government, we take all causes common to all the tribes, as the elders of Manasseh were elders to the tribe of Benjamin, so in like manner must these elders of a presbytery, in common to all these congregations, be supposed to be to each congregation, when any cause comes afore them in their cognisance.

(4.) Lastly, Those places and exhortations of Scripture concerning the duties of elders, &c., to their flocks, and their flocks to them, may be alleged to strengthen the argument: Heb. xiii. 7, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, and have spoken the word of God to you.' And 1 Thess. v. 12, 'Know them which labour among you, and are over you, and admonish you.' And to the same purpose is the charge, Acts xx., to the elders of Ephesus, 'Feed the flock,' &c. These are all spoken of them, and to them, under the very notion and relation of elders and rulers (which is equivalent), and as their rulers and elders. And surely if any person in a congregation were called afore one of those presbyteries over many congregations, they would urge upon the conscience of the person these and the like places, to obey them by virtue of these commands. If he should reply, that these places

speak of such as have the relation of elders to their flocks, and every person therein; and that by virtue of their being such to them this obedience is urged upon them; but you of the presbytery do not own the elders of your presbytery to have a relation to the congregation I am of, and so I am quit of obedience to you; how could they, by virtue of these places, holding this principle, that they have not the relation of elders to him, enforce obedience from him? And how will his conscience ever be brought to a submission to their sentence against him, if not satisfied of this relation to him thus specified? And yet would not these elders, by the presbyterial principles, expect equal, if not more obedience from him, than the elders of that particular congregation he is a member of would do? I am sure that in practice they assume more; and I doubt not, but any one of these elders, or all of them apart, would as authoritatively admonish him (as an elder to him) in private after the cause is brought afore the presbytery, to obey and submit to them, as any of his own elders would do before or after their public admonition, and would require obedience to him as an elder, by virtue of these places of Scripture before mentioned. If therefore they would require it, then the relation must be the same; yea, do not often some few of the elders of a common presbytery come into particular congregations, and perform acts of government, and ordain elders to them; and, in case of obstinacy, excommunicate the elders of any particular congregation? Upon what plea of authority do they this? as elders to that particular congregation or not?

4. We come now to consider the other distinction: 1, Of their being elders only in a community to all these congregations as one church, *in sensu aggregato;* and, 2, of their being apart elders unto their particular congregations respectively. And so the duties mentioned of feeding the flock, &c., concern them only as considered apart; but acts of government belong to them as elders in a presbytery. We reply, 1, that this answer supposeth two distinct differing relations, the one a more particular relation of elders, as proper elders to their several congregations apart; and another more common relation of the same persons considered as elders merely, as in a presbytery. Now, for the confirmation or establishment of this distinction, by the one side or the other, the foundation on which we proceed must be remembered, viz., what the Scriptures hold forth; and therefore whatever suppositions or instances may be found in other constitutions, to illustrate such distinctions here, yet, if what the New Testament speaks of elders in relation to their flock, warranteth it not, yea, crosseth it, it may not be. Now then, it is to be considered that, when the New Testament speaks of elders and churches, it speaks universally, and without distinction of a different relation. It calls them simply and singly elders of the church, and delivers (in that relation) to their church they were elders of, exhortations to their duties, which that relation specially called for; and in those exhortations intends their duties, as their elders, met in a presbytery, as well as those they are to perform in other ministrations towards their flocks; and on the other side, exhorts the people, in like similar expressions, to obey and honour their elders that preach the word, rule them, and admonish them, prescribing obedience to them in their rule as a presbytery, as well as in other administrations; and all this without any distinction of this relation of elders, in common and in special. And farther it is enjoined, that these presbyterial elders must perform those duties which belong to their office, unto all those they are thus elders unto, without any manifest distinction of any several bounds of this so differing relation. This evidently argueth that there is but one single relation of elders to one flock, to whom they perform these duties, and that the same that preach ought to rule them in pub-

lic; and that the same persons that admonish them privately, do also in the public presbytery rule them; and that the same persons that rule them in those public presbyteries do admonish them in private. So then, the same persons sustain in the Holy Ghost's intention and view, when he made those exhortations, one and the same univocal relation of elders to their flocks, committed by him to them, whether they be met in a presbytery for acts of government, or otherwise perform the duties of elders apart. And it is evident, that in a particular congregation they are elders in one univocal similar relation unto the whole flock, and every member thereof. But now this is the wonder, that when elders are thus affixed to particular congregations, and that their relation is a differing relation from that other in common presbyteries (yea, so vastly differing, that our brethren dare scarce acknowledge them elders, calling them rather a presbytery than elders of those churches), that yet the exhortations in the Scriptures should so univocally fall on them, to so differing duties, founded on different relations; and that yet this only general relation of elders to their particular congregations should not be mentioned apart, and the duties accompanying it, singled out from the rest, seems to us very strange. Yea, and to direct the discharge of the duties of the people likewise to either of these elders (that they might know what duties to perform to their more proper elders, acknowledged theirs by way of so eminent and differing a relation, and what to those more common; and that all confusion might be prevented, that the one assume not the duties of the other), it was as necessary to have set the differing limits of these, as to set the bounds of officers in the church, which the Holy Ghost hath done.

2. And secondly, if there had been this differing relation of elders, which from those similitudes in commonwealths, armies, and universities is given, it was necessary that the Scripture should have held it forth, either by differing names and respects, or by differing charges, whereby it might appear that this relation obligeth them to this duty, and the other relation to that; which being not done in Scripture, the distinction will not pass upon us. That it is thought necessary that the Scripture should prescribe herein, appears from the instances brought by the reverend respondents. As, 1, that of the tribes, where there were general elders of all the tribes, and there were (and perhaps some of them the same men) heads and elders of tribes; but as this was a differing relation and respect in the same or diverse persons, so they had names and titles of difference and distinction; for the heads general (as we call them) were called elders of the people; the particular elders of particular tribes were called, by way of distinction from them, elders of such cities, families, &c.; and there were as distinct laws given, so that in some causes the elders of the several tribes did judge such and such particulars in their tribes respectively; and the general elders had reserved cases of war, blasphemy, &c.

So in that instance of heads of colleges and heads of the university, there is a differing relation, so a distinguishing character; for the names are changed, since the particular bodies are called colleges, and the general body the university. And their several special relation to their colleges is expressed by the title of masters of such or such colleges, and the other by the title of heads to the university. Yea, and accordingly there are differing statutes, the local statutes for each college apart, or for colleges as colleges, and the duties of masters in their special relations; and there are statutes for the university, and for their duties as heads of it. And this distinction or difference was necessary here too, if there were this differing relation; but, for the case in hand, if we come to the New Testament, to find out the

several modifications and relations of elders therein, we still read but simply and singly, elders and churches, as relatives, without any such note of distinction of a classical church, and the presbytery thereof, and the congregational church, and the elders thereof. The New Testament, in all its mentioning of elders, speaks uniformly of them as elders of the church, and this rule is to us certain. *Ubi Scriptura non distinguit, nec debemus distinguere*, where the Scripture makes no distinction, we ought not to make any.

But, however, I will represent the difference between us and our brethren by the proposition of such a case in law as this is: If all the records and ruled cases and laws of this kingdom should, in setting down the ordinary government thereof, have made mention only and singly of burgesses (as the rulers) of corporations (as the correlate to them), and used no other distinguishing word (when yet there were undeniably burgesses of every incorporate town continued from antiquity), might any one afterwards pretend that this word *corporation* was intended by our ancestors to import an association or community of many of these corporations in one shire; and that by burgesses of these corporations were meant a community of all these burgesses in one body for government; and so pretend to the same name without distinction, and say that these communities were also meant, and to prove it, give instance in some foreign government, where there are states general of provinces, and states particular of cities, whenas they have in their laws a distinction and differencing character, but in the laws of this kingdom there is no such distinction made? But now, if the laws about the choice of such burgesses in each corporation, and the duties given them in charge, and their relation to their corporations, do run without any distinction of what the burgesses in the supposed greater corporations should do in that relation and community, from what the same burgesses in their lesser corporations do in their more proper relations; yea, and if the duties set down in those laws, mutually between corporations and those burgesses, should argue an inconsistency with the government of burgesses over many corporations in common; but should all naturally fall in with that of burgesses over single corporations, and argue such a relation, would not this plainly evidence that therefore the laws of the kingdom did hold forth, there might not be (that is, according to the laws thereof), such a government of the burgesses of corporations over many others? And if, in answer to such arguments, it should be said, that both these might be consistent; for that in other foreign states, and kingdoms, and societies, there are burgesses of particular corporations, and there are burgesses in an assembly of parliament (so called by way of distinction) met in common for the ordinary government of all those corporations in common, and therefore the like may be here in this; the reply were easy, that whatever such distinction there is in other states, yet the question is of such burgesses as the laws of this state holds forth, and as this kingdom hath set up, where there is no such distinction of burgesses of corporations and burgesses in parliament mentioned; but, on the contrary, only one single uniform style and title in the laws, namely, burgesses of the corporations; and further, the rules about their choice and duties mutually between them, and the corporation they have relation to, be also delivered without any difference; which doth argue them to have been anciently the relation of burgesses to some one corporation, and not many, yea, to be utterly incongruous and inconsistent with such a manifold relation. Now, parallel to this case, are our arguments, and the answers given to the arguments of our presbyterian brethren.

But they retort the argument upon us, and say, that it follows no more that they are to be elders to each congregation, because joined in a common

presbytery, than that in a particular congregation, Peter, or one member apart, hath a power over John, because, in community with the rest of the brethren, he hath power over any one.

We answer, that let this parallel decide it, and then, as the foundation of any one member's having an interest in that community over John or any other, consists in this, that he stands in the relation of a brother to John, as a member of that church, and so in like manner to all the rest of the members in that community; so likewise all, and every one, when in that common fraternity, stand in the very same relation of brethren to John, as well as when they are apart out of it, and do not become brethren, having power over him, because met in a community, but therefore meet, because, as brethren, this duty lies on them in common, to judge him, as much as in private to admonish him, and so one and the same relation puts them upon both these duties. And in Scripture, the exhortations run to the same persons to perform these duties, though of differing sort, because of their relation as brethren. Let this parallel be applied to the thing in hand, and as it answers the instance, so it strengthens our argument.

Lastly, If they be acknowledged to have the relation of elders as assembled in a presbytery, and in that respect to have a relation to all the people in the several congregations, yet still the same incongruities mentioned will follow upon it. For many of those duties, from all the congregation, as honour, maintenance, &c., are due to them, as well as to their own elders, for that their work's sake; and the acts, too, also of these elders in this presbytery, though in common, are the most eminent acts that belong to the office of elders, and in which the consciences and interest of the people, and each member, is as much concerned, as in the daily preaching of their more proper elders (as for distinction's sake we now call them), for they have power, and they alone, to cut them off from all ordinances, and to deliver them unto Satan. Now, then, if they are to be interested in the choice of their proper elders, to rule them in smaller things, then their concern ought to be as much in the choice of, and consenting to these their general elders, and they should be present at the ordination of all of them; for one great part of their function is to be exercised towards any and all of those congregations, in a standing way, yea, and to rule them in matters of the greatest concernment. Thus, then, so far as they are acknowledged elders, so far these inconveniences will still follow upon the heels of that acknowledgment; and the Scriptures indifferently speaking of the same thing, without distinction of both these kinds of relations, under the common name of elders, the people have as much cause to challenge their right about the one as they have about the other, and these elders may expect the same (by virtue of those scriptures) from the people.

CHAPTER VI.

The incongruities which flow from the elders of a presbytery sustaining special relation of elders to all the particular congregations.

I have proved that if a presbytery be set over many congregations, the presbyters thereof must bear a special relation of constant and established elders to all those congregations. I shall now evince, that for these elders already fixed to several charges, to sustain also a special relation of ordinary and standing elders to all these congregations, as one church, and all the

people thereof as members of that church, carries with it great and manifold incongruities and inconsistencies also, with what the Scriptures hold forth concerning elders and other officers of churches, as also with the principles professed by the reformed churches themselves.

1. This breeds an incongruous disproportion between the relation of the officers of a church, of this sort of officers, namely, elders, in the extent of their relation and power; and of those other sort of officers of the churches acknowledged by the reformed churches, viz. deacons. Now let us therefore put it to the examination of the conscientious, whether what the Scripture speaks of elders, and of their commission, duties, &c., in their several relations to the flock under them, will afford clearer characters of the extent of their standing government, to be congregational to one congregation, than of its being classical over many. Yea, let us see whether the descriptions of elders, and exhortations given unto them concerning their several charges, do not plainly overthrow any such relation of elders (as elders) unto many congregations, as inconsistent thereunto. Surely unto us there appear many great and unanswerable incongruities and inconsistencies in this classical government.

If we compare the extent of this office of elders in their relation with the extent of other church officers in their relation, we shall find that what holds true of one sort of ordinary officers of a church, according to the word, may well be supposed to hold true of another; or else there is a disproportion between the several relations of officers, and the one is not of like extent with the other, which yet the Scriptures make commensurable, and to be of equal extent. More plainly, if the Scriptures had intended, and held forth many churches as making one church; and the elders of those many churches to have been elders in common to those churches, as one church; then the deacons of all those churches should make up a common deaconry, and be deacons in common unto all those churches in an ordinary way, as the other are elders. But this is contrary to the practice of the reformed churches, though subject to the presbyterial government, in which the deacons have the ordinary relation of deacons, in no respect extended further than to a particular congregation; nor do they exercise acts of that office in a set way to other congregations, nor to neighbour congregations more than to another, much less is there a common deaconship of them all. And yet, why should not this common deaconry be erected over all those churches as one church, as well as a common eldership, especially if in matters of this nature a parity of reason should carry it? For,

1. A church in Scripture, and all the officers, are alike relatives, as a church and the elders are. The best of the presbyterial arguments for this common presbytery are founded upon the commensurable extent and relation of church and elders, that if any churches make one church, then the elders of them all make one eldership, and they are elders in common unto them; then why not the deacons also? Now this reason of theirs, fetched from this mutual relation of one church, and one eldership or elders thereof, will require the like for deacons; for every church, as it is a church, being a body, hath a relation to all its officers as organical members thereof. As we have it asserted, Rom. xii. 4, 'As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office,' so it is also in the church of Christ; and the members have several offices in the church, which he mentioneth, ver. 8; and so if that church of Rome were one body, and a church of many churches, then the deacons were deacons in common of those many churches as they all were one church. For as the pastor's and teacher's office is held forth in that following description, ver. 8, 'he that exhorteth,' and 'he that

teacheth,' so the deacon's in that, 'he that giveth.' And in the analogy of the natural body (to which there the apostle refers us, to exemplify this of a church organised with officers, as a body to Christ), though one member may be less and inferior to another in bulk or use, yet it is a member of that whole body in its use. The little finger is a finger of the whole body, as well as the arm is a member of the whole; the foot that serves the whole body is a member in its office as fully as the hand, and the extent of its jurisdiction or use, according to its kind, is the same, by virtue of the same relations. If, therefore, these are elders in common, or an eldership do rule in common those congregations as one church, and as organical members thereof, as one body, then why should not the deacons, in as ordinary a way, perform their office in common, and bear the relation of deacons in common unto all as one church? And,

2. The Scriptures do confirm this like commensurable extent of the deacons' and elders' offices, as relating to a church, for the apostle writing to Philippi, a church in a city (which therefore we suppose our brethren will needs have to have been a presbyterial church, of many congregations, lest any one instance of a complete congregational church should be left unto us), he writes to the bishops (the elders) and the deacons of that church. And Acts vi., the deacons of the church of Jerusalem (if there were many congregations, as our brethren suppose) were chosen by the whole multitude when gathered together by the twelve, and therefore were deacons of that whole church, as well as the elders were elders thereof. Now if the deacon's office should thus be extended to all the congregations, as the elder's is, then why should not each church be bound to bring contributions to the deacons of each church, to be distributed in common; and so our purses should be subject to the deacons in common, as far as our consciences to the elders in common, and they might challenge the same power in their office over the one that the elders do over the other; and then also each congregation were in as ordinary and standing an obligation bound to relieve all the poor in those churches, as well as those in their own, not only by the common law of charity, but by virtue of a special relation of their being one church, which relation in all these things doth beget the like obligation that it doth in government, and so all things in this nature should be alike common to all and each, and there should be a common treasury for this one great diaconate church (as we may in a parallel allusion to that other name of presbyterial call it), as there is a common *regimen* or government for this great presbyterial church. This strange disproportion between the officers or members of this body which the presbyterial government doth make, seems to us, at least, unnatural, whereas this (as all other things) fall in suitably and naturally, when the relation of elders and elderships is extended no further than each congregation, which, as it is to be an organical body unto Christ, so the officers and members thereof, according to the law of nature, are alike members of and for that body, and the use, service, relation, of all and each in their several kinds bear a like proportion to the whole. And that, even by the practice and judgment of the reformed churches themselves, the deacons are confined to each particular congregation, is to us a testimony (as the remaining office of overseers for the poor under the episcopal government hath been judged a pregnant evidence of the deacon's office once in the church) that the limits of a church and elders were all once within a particular congregation, although the elders, because a superior office, have assumed to extend their power and jurisdiction in their kind further than the other more inferior in theirs.

But let it be supposed that some reason of difference might be given of

this disproportion in the elders' office, and the deacons', and that a common deaconry would not follow upon a common presbytery; yet,

2. There are other as great incongruities will fall upon the very relations of the elders' office themselves, which this frame of fixed elders to some congregations respectively, and yet of ordinary elders to all of them, causeth. God hath made some preaching elders, some ruling elders (as the reformed churches allow) or church governors, to assist the pastors in government. And to preaching elders both preaching and ruling belongs, which are conjunct in that office, according to the principles of the presbyterial government and the Scriptures. But the business of ruling belongs only to the other, and by this they are distinct, as two subordinate species, or as the sensitive and reasonable soul, whereof the one hath sense only in all its acts, the other both sense and reason, and yet are specifically distinct.

Every church of Christ is a body ordered, Col. ii. 1, 'rejoicing' (says Paul) 'to see your order.' And the intent of the presbyterial goverment is professed to be, to preserve order in the church; and if in anything this order is most to be seen, it is in the distinction and order of the officers thereof. Now this frame of government brings in a great disorder in the offices and officers, and confounds them and their relations. To demonstrate this, let us consider the pastors, or preaching elders. They are all undeniably preaching elders to their particular congregations, of which they are the fixed pastors; and yet they have another relation of elders (by means of this presbyterial government) to all these congregations, considered as one church; and if these pastors be any way elders to both, they must sustain the title of both sorts of elders in these two differing relations, which is an evident confounding of both these offices in one and the same person. For,

1. It is evident that they do each apart bear the title and relation of preaching elders unto their particular congregations, and such pastors, or such preaching elders, they can be to no more or other than those they ordinarily preach unto, for they labour in the word and doctrine unto no other; and this is the character of distinction from the other elders and governors in 1 Tim. v. 17. And it is evident that they, being fixed each as pastors to their particular congregations, cannot labour in the word and doctrine to them all; therefore they sustain this title in distinction of elders only unto those their several charges. And it is certain that all offices have their distinction and denomination from that special praxis or function they are ordained unto, as that is an eye to the body whose praxis or function is to see for the whole body. They can therefore be said to be preaching elders to no other of this classical church than that praxis of preaching is extended unto. It is an argument which Whitaker useth against the pope, and our divines make use of it against the bishops, that nor he nor they can be said to be pastors unto all they yet pretended to be pastors unto, because they are not able to exercise the functions of pastors unto them. Therefore,

2. We ask what sort of elders the pastors are that are in this common presbytery? What sort of relation of elders do they bear to this one presbyterial church, over and above that relation they as pastors bear to their own (and this church and elders as elders are relatives, as well as the particular congregations and their elders, or else this great church must want its correlative of elders to it)? Surely they bear no other relation than of ruling elders, if they be elders at all (and to make them no elders, and not to have the relation of elders to this great church in this presbytery, we believe will not be affirmed); and if they be elders, then the notion of their being elders must have one of those two fore-mentioned formal differences annexed to it, either of preaching elders or merely ruling; and this difference and denomi-

nation must be fetched (as was said afore) from the differing praxis or use they serve for. And it is evident that the ordinary acts they serve for and exercise in those common presbyteries are merely acts of ruling elders (in all which therefore ruling elders concur in common with them), and accordingly it is called the presbyterian government.

And further, the power of an office in the church (though exercised but as conjoined with others) is a relation in respect to some administration in a constancy; now the constant and ordinary administration they serve for in such a presbytery is only ruling, not teaching, there being no acts but such that ruling elders join in. So as by this frame, the same preaching elder or pastor must bear two sorts of ordinary offices in these two relations, of a preaching and a mere ruling elder, as if one were both a physician and a chirurgeon, and were fixed to one of the companies in the city to practise physic to them, he sustained the office of a physician to that company; and if he were besides called to practise chirurgery to many other companies, he were certainly only a chirurgeon unto them, as truly as a physician to the other. So as we shall not need to dispute the point of ruling elders any more; for here are such as are elders, acknowledged such by all sides, and yet for the sort of their office but plain ruling elders, and deserve properly in this relation no other name, if we hold the presbyterial government; and they are as truly and properly to this presbyterial church such, and no other, as those governors that preach not at all are unto those they are elders unto.

And this incongruity no distinction will salve; call them elders in this presbytery, in what sense you please, whether *in sensu diviso* or *conjuncto*, yet elders they are; and if so, then one of these two sorts of elders they must be to this presbyterial church, either both preaching and ruling elders, or merely ruling. Their being elders together in this presbytery, cannot be supposed to divest them of the title of some sort of elders (and there is not a third sort), no more than the elders of a congregation, met in a presbytery, do thereby lose the title of elders which they sustain to that congregation, or no more (as was even now instanced) than when the body hath two eyes that always concur in one act of sight, either of them should not be denominated eyes unto the body apart, and the one called the left, and the other the right.

The disorder and confusion hereby may be further set out, 1. That by this means the same officer hath a full relation to one church, and but half a relation unto another; and it causeth him to perform the whole of his offices to one church (the particular church) to which he hath relation, and but the half thereof to the other. And 2. It makes an ordinary pastor, not only perform the work of two officers, but to bear the relation of two offices; for in his several relations to these two several churches, his congregational and classical, his relations are parted and divided.

And it brings up the same absurdity which was put upon episcopal government, that a bishop, professing himself to bear the relation of a pastor to the whole diocese, yet was but a ruling elder to them, not a teaching.

3. To extend a pastor's power of ordinary ruling beyond the extent of his ordinary teaching, is against the order which Christ hath set (and all extent of power must as well have an institution of Christ, as the power or office itself; for the difference of evangelists, and of ordinary pastors, lay but in extent of power), and then we argue thus: If the extent of a pastor's ordinary ruling power, as a pastor and elder, be but to the flock, as his whole flock, which he is able to feed, then to bear the relation of a pastor

or elder for ordinary government to any more than he is able, and doth thus feed, may not be; but the extent of a pastor's ordinary ruling power is but to that flock, as his whole flock, which he is able to feed. And this argument, as also the former, besides that it serves to make up more incongruities of this presbyterial government, so it might stand alone, and make a complete argument of itself against it; for if the pastor's ordinary power in ruling be not to be extended further than of his ordinary preaching, then this ordinary standing government of pastors fixed for preaching to their own congregations may not be over those many in common.

Now, that the extent of a pastor's ordinary ruling power reacheth only to that flock which he is able to feed, I prove, 1, by Scripture; 2, by reason.

1. I prove it by Scripture: Acts xx. 28, 'Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock (the whole flock, παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ) over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Here are, 1, elders (ver. 17) spoken to. 2. Their having relation to a flock, an whole flock, is mentioned. 3. They are enjoined to 'feed the flock,' and 'the whole flock;' and all these are commensurable. Whence, 1, we see that the special limitation of their extensive power and relation to a flock, and to all the flock, is set by the Holy Ghost, and not by man; and therefore is not to be extended by man, further than the Holy Ghost hath appointed. 2. The extent of that relation is to that flock, and the whole flock they feed; and they are to feed all that flock alike. And if they be preaching elders, then they must feed it by preaching; and therefore are overseers to them, to feed them, and because they feed them. 3. He speaks to preaching elders especially, that feed by doctrine; for (1.) he propounds his own example to them, ver. 20, that he had revealed the whole counsel of God; and (2.) he says, ver. 30, 'Some of you shall arise, speaking perverse things.' And it is Paul's farewell; and (as Bains argues against bishops) those to whom at last the apostles commended churches, were the ordinary governors left; but he commended them not to a bishop, but ordinary elders. Thus we argue also, for the extent of the relation of those elders, that they are to govern only that flock that they are able to feed; and therefore they have not the office of overseeing, as ordinary elders, over those whom they feed not. And Peter seconds Paul in this: 1 Peter v. 2, 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.' The flock, ἐν ὑμῖν, among you, is that flock that any of them had relation to, as his flock respectively. Thereupon, writing unto the churches in a whole nation, in chap. i. ver. 1 (whereas in Acts xx. 28, the charge is to the particular elders of Ephesus, to that whole flock), he therefore puts in that note of respectiveness, ἐν ὑμῖν, among you, that is, that which respectively belongs to you, answerable to which is that text, Col. i. 17, 'Who is for you a faithful minister,' that is, your proper pastor; and Acts xiv. 23, they ordained elders church by church, elders to them, that is, proper elders to them; so the flock, ἐν ὑμῖν, signifies your several proper flocks that belong to you. Hereby it appears, that their feeding and their oversight over any of those flocks are commensurable; and that flock which they are not able to feed, they have not the oversight over, for they are both of the same extent. Thus also, Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, and have spoken to you the word of God,' which he speaks of preaching elders, for the extent of their rule and their preaching is all one. And of ruling elders he speaks, ver. 17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you; for they watch for your souls, as those that must give an account.' And not to dispute whether these places note out two sorts of officers, preaching elders, ver. 7, and ruling elders, ver. 17, or but one sort, and so but several

acts of the same office, yet this is certain, that these are commensurable, for they are officers together in the same church. And if the pastor's power of ruling extends no further than his preaching, then the mere ruling elder's power, or his that is assistant to him, must extend no further also. 1. Remember those that have spoken the word to you. 2. Obey and submit to those that watch for your souls. This is the natural obligation to obedience, and so is the measure to set the bounds of the extent of ordinary church power. It is one argument used against episcopal power, that they are enforced to obey him that speaks not the word to them, nor watcheth over their souls; and this holds as well against these presbyterial officers. And when a man comes before such to be excommunicated, he may say, I am not bound to obey you in such an authoritative way, nor do I owe a subjection as to a power of censure in you; for many, nay, most of you, have never spoke the word to me, nor do watch over my soul; nay, perhaps the man can say he never saw their faces afore. And it avails not to say, that they may occasionally preach; for the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 12, speaking of respect to their officers, 'Know them,' says he, 'that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.' These two, those that labour and are over you, are commensurable, and they are meant, who make it their callings to have the care of the flock, which the many pastors and elders in a common presbytery do not. But in what is it they labour? The 1 Tim. v. 17 expounds it to be, 'that labour in the word and doctrine;' 'the elders that rule well, as worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and doctrine.' And whether you expound this latter known place of teaching elders only, or of ruling and teaching both (as the reformed churches do), however it affords this to us, that the extent of ruling, in either the one or the other, is but as large as teaching. And if it be meant of teaching elders only, that both rule and labour in the word and doctrine, yet if they be limited in labouring in the word, as being fixed pastors to their own congregations, then in ruling also. And if it be meant of ruling elders (as distinct from them), yet their ruling is of the same extent that the others' labouring in the word, and that is extended but to one congregation, where as pastors they are fixed. And

2. Though in a pastor's office preaching and ruling is joined, yet his power of ruling flows in him from, and is the adjunct of, his power to preach; and to be sure it is not extendable further. And however, yet there is the same proportion of either; and then by just reason, the extent of the church, which is the subject of his ordinary ruling, cannot be extended larger than what is the ordinary subject of his preaching; and so those relations are of equal limits (which is the present case of a pastor's authority, appropriated to a congregation, and extended but to his own in an ordinary way), and to make the ground of a relation narrower than the extent of it is absurd. If a father hath the power of governing as a father, then it is extendable only to those he is a father to. And that a pastor hath his ordinary ruling power annexed to his ordinary power of preaching, we prove by these reasons.

1. If he hath not his ruling power upon this ground, then must be assigned some other. He hath it not by any special faculty or office over and above this of preaching; for then he should be made a ruling elder, over and above his being first a preaching elder, as a new faculty given him. Nor hath he it by being made a ruler first, and then having this of preaching superadded (as the bishops first made deacons, then presbyters). For

2. All the keys are given him at once, the keys of ruling with the keys of knowledge. The power of the staff intrinsecally follows, his being a pastor or shepherd; and though the one is a power of mere order, namely, that of

preaching, and that of his ruling is of jurisdiction (to be exercised in many cases with others, and not alone), yet still his receiving power to join with others in those acts of rule of jurisdiction, is from this power of order, and the ordinary extent of his authority therein is extended no further than his ordinary call to preaching. Yea,

3. The extent of the power of the apostles themselves in ruling in all the churches was founded upon and extendable with their commission to preach; and their very call and obligation being not to preach in a set and fixed relation, as an ordinary pastor's calling is, but to all nations and in all churches, hence their power of ruling was answerable. It was their very call to be universal pastors, and therefore universal rulers; yea, and their authority of ruling was narrower in the extent of it than of their preaching. The apostles might preach to heathens, and their call was so to do, to convert them, but they had not power to rule all men: 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' says the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 12. But in this way of presbyterial government, though they also may occasionally preach where they may not rule, yet the proportion of their ordinary ruling is extended beyond the proportion of their ordinary preaching, which was not so in the apostles themselves. Let but the same line of proportion equally be drawn over the apostles' power in these and theirs, according to their several measures. Their call to ruling was uniform to preaching in all churches, though their preaching was larger than their rule, namely, to those without; but ordinary pastors have a standing fixed call to preach but in one congregation. Let their call and power of ruling be uniform to it, and they can have an ordinary standing power to rule but in that congregation; either extend both further, or contract both to this. It is no answer to say that they may preach as pastors in neighbour churches occasionally, for so they may preach to any reformed church, as in Scotland, where yet they have not so much as an occasional call to rule; and in such occasional acts of preaching also they have but the proportion which the apostles had, whose power in preaching was larger than of ruling, for it was extended to them without; but still if an ordinary standing power in ruling, although with others (for the apostles exercised their power with others), should be stretched where they have not an ordinary standing call to preach, it should exceed the proportion of the apostles in that respect.

4. And, fourthly, from hence ariseth another disproportion between these officers, ruling and preaching elders, compared among themselves, and it is such a disproportion as is like to the former alleged between the deacons and the elders; for this government makes the extent of the ruling elder's office and relation to be larger than that of the teacher's or pastor's; for the pastor, as pastor, is limited to his particular congregation he is fixed to, as the deacons also are; but the ruling elder's office, as ruling elder, is extended over all these congregations in this presbytery. The ruling elder performs his office in the highest perfection of it, as to admonish, excommunicate, &c., to all in these churches, but the pastors are limited as pastors in the highest work of their callings (which preaching is, and more excellent than ruling, yea, than baptizing), unto one congregation. That place in 1 Tim. v. 17, (interpret how you will) justifies what is asserted.

Now these are strange disproportions, which are occasioned by this and the presbyterial government; and this greatly makes for the congregational way, wherein as to these particulars no such incongruities are found, but all things fall naturally uniform.

2. A second head of incongruities and inconsistencies which will follow upon this government, concerns the mutual duties required, that do necessarily

follow upon this standing relation for a constant government of these elders to all this people of these churches, and of the people to these elders.

1. The people of all these elders (according to what the Scripture speaks of as due to standing elders) owe at least honour and esteem to them, yea, maintenance to all of them, whether they ordinarily rule them or preach to them, and they owe it on both accounts: 1 Tim. iv. 17, 18, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially that labour in the word and doctrine;' which honour is (ver. 18), in the analogy of that law, 'not to muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn;' and this is certainly due to elders on account of what is the work of elders, whether performed apart or together by way of jurisdiction. And it cannot be denied but that their constant ruling, as in the presbytery, is one great part of the work of elders here intended, and mentioned with preaching, for which an especial honour is due. God appoints no constant work in the ministry, but he appoints a reward from those for whom it is performed; and as they owe a duty of ruling to every one in the flock, as Acts xx. 28, so there is a due of maintenance and honour due from all this people to all and every one of those elders, to those that rule, as well as to those that labour in the word and doctrine; and in reason, if the elders that rule well and perform the lesser acts of ruling in their particular congregations are to have this honour from them in their relations, then all these elders that rule well in the common presbytery, and perform the greatest acts of ruling, are to have the like from all of that classical church; for the emphasis being put upon ruling well, and in those acts done by them the excellency of ruling consisting, therefore to these is this honour due from this great church, more especially than from the lesser congregations respectively unto their proper elders. Neither will the distinction of being a presbytery in common salve it, for if the particular elders of congregations are to have this honour for what is done by them in their joint acts of ruling in the particular presbyteries, then these are to have it in what is done in their common presbyteries also; and the precept is not to honour presbyteries in common in an abstract notion, but to honour elders, because the particular persons of the elders are to be the object of it, and those most who excel most in that rule, that rule well or best. But when there are many congregations apart who have their proper fixed pastors and elders, whom they maintain for performing one part of the elder's work (for they perform but one part of it), how shall they perform this due to all the rest for that other part of the work? How burdensome, how confused, must this be! And yet due it is, for they are all one church to them. And then how can this duty be proportioned (suppose it should not be maintenance, but honour and esteem), for the people will not be able well to judge of it, not only because they cannot be present at their work, and so cannot judge of it, but because either it must be proportioned to them that are constant as preaching elders or as ruling; for the ground it is there (1 Tim. v. 18) required upon is that they tread out their corn, and the apostle says, 'Esteem them for their work's sake that labour among you,' 1 Thes. v. 12, 13, so as it is to be proportioned to the work of a pastor, as pastor; but to honour or esteem them as ruling elders only, were to honour the preaching elders below the rank and degree of their office.

2. It also brings the like incongruity upon the performance of those duties of elders, which the New Testament indifferently requires of all those that it acknowledgeth to be elders unto a people, and therefore no such constant relation of elders to so many churches may be. 1. One duty is praying with the sick: 'Send for the elders of the church, to pray for them,' James v. 14. What! are these elders of the presbyterial church bound to this?

And this duty lies in common upon elders of the churches ; and how shall we distinguish when the Scripture doth not ? 2. Another duty is visiting from house to house, as Paul in his example instructs the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx. 20. 3. Another duty is watching over men's souls, as those that must give an account, Heb. xiii. 17 ; and that the people should obey them, and no warrant is given to obey others in the way of an ordinary rule. And to watch, is not to stay till causes are brought by appeals or so from the congregations, but personally to watch over them as souls committed to them. 4. Another duty is preaching (if they be preaching elders) in season and out of season. The bishops said, the flock was theirs, and the whole care committed to them ; and to salve the incongruity of not being able to preach themselves to them all, they professed a derivative delegated power to inferior pastors, whom they called their curates. This was plain dealing, but these elders make all the whole flock theirs, and this from those scriptures that speak of elders and flock ; and yet themselves have no curates, and so are personally obliged, according to the rules in Scripture, and yet cannot perform the obligation, which is a worse incongruity. 5. It will be their duty also to attend to all causes, which so many churches will fill their hands with sufficiently, for churches will be full of scandal, and there will be cases of difficulty. What a deal of work did one church of Corinth find Paul ! And it is the duty of each elder to attend to all those that come in his cognisance, as if he alone were to judge, for he is to give his judgment of them all, as one that is to give an account. It is an argument against episcopacy, that they cannot take the care (according to what the Scripture seems to require of an ordinary officer) of so many churches in a diocese ; now this work (suppose of ruling only, as in a presbytery) lies upon each of these elders, as if he were but one, as to the matters of attending thereto (as was said) though each is helped by the suggestion of others. And besides the common work that must needs arise from all these churches, they are to attend to all cases of conscience and of temptations in their particular congregations, or from elsewhere, if those churches will have recourse to them. If it be said, that they may part these duties among them, and perform only to the whole those that are in common, the answer is plain, *Ubi scriptura non distinguit, nec nos debemus distinguere*, Where the Scripture makes no distinction, we ought not to distinguish. Now all those duties are spoken of, as owing from elders to the flock, without any distinction. Paul saith to those Ephesians, 'Feed the whole flock,' Acts xx. 28. Peter says the like to those he writes to, that they respectively should feed and take the oversight over the flock, ἐν ὑμῖν, which was among them. The apostle tells the Hebrews that their elders watched over their souls, Heb. xiii. 17. And to the Thessalonians, he describes them to be those that are over them, and labour and admonish them, 1 Thes. v. 12. When these injunctions are thus laid upon all, how shall the conscience of elders be able to part and distinguish themselves out of the discharge of them, and to say, Though I am an elder in common to all in these congregations; yet I am bound but to govern them in greater matters, and to admonish them as with others, when publicly met in a consistory, and to no other acts of eldership ; and yet to my own particular congregation, I am obliged to private admonition, rule, and watchfulness, &c. Where hath the Scripture set these bounds, or thus parted them ? Therefore, certainly all these places hold forth singly only the elders of a particular church fixed thereto, and their duty to it, as knowing no other. And indeed it was necessary that Christ should set the bounds and give the distinction, and not indifferently lay all these duties upon

all; and either in these places the duties of elders in a common presbytery are contained, or they are not to be found in the New Testament.

Lastly, That which is inconsistent with the ordinary way of the call of elders held forth in the word, and by the reformed churches allowed, may not be; but such is this presbyterian government. It is the call which breeds relation between elders and church, and is the foundation of it. None are to assume the honour of ruling the church of Christ, that are not called thereto, as Aaron was not to have been over all the church, but that he was called of God.

There are two parts of this calling: 1, choice; 2, ordination.

1. As for choice, Chamier, in the name of all the reformed churches, allows to the people the approbation of their elders; and so it is in Scotland. And if the apostles themselves allowed them the choice of the deacons that had the charge of the church treasury, and took care of their bodies, then much more of their elders, that have to do with their consciences. Look whatever right of the people is in the choice of those who should preach to them, there is as much reason they should have the exercise of it in the choice of these that in a common presbytery do rule over them; for they perform one part of the elders' duty, namely, ruling, as the preaching elders do the other; and therefore by the equity of the same law that speaks of elders indefinitely, if they choose any elders as elders to them, they are to choose these also, there being no distinction put of choosing preaching elders only, but elders indefinitely. And further, the greatest and highest acts of power over them are committed in an ordinary way unto them, as of excommunication, which is of all punishments the most formidable; and so there is put as much, if not more, than every man's life, that is a member of that classical church, into their hands. The enjoyment of all ordinances for ever, and the power of deposing their ministers already fixed to them, and the power of refusing to ordain them they shall approve, is lodged in this classis. And therefore in the primitive church the persons of the bishops, who had the power of all these, were chosen by all the people, and by panegyrical meetings.

And the argument is strengthened by this further parallel. A minister's call hath two parts: 1, ordination, which belongs to the elders; 2, choice, in which the people have some interest; therefore these elders as elders in common, and these congregations as one church, being relatives, that interest which a church hath as a church is commensurable to the interest of these elders as elders. If therefore in ordination all the elders in a common presbytery join to ordain an officer, then all the people as a church must join in choosing and approving him; for the common right of choosing cannot be swallowed up by the interest of their elders ordaining him. And if it be said they all choose by virtue of the general law of combination, as in the shires they do parliament men, it is answered, that the constitution of the state makes it so, and if the like be found in Scripture for this other, it is sufficient; but if not, but that this interest must be common to the people of the classical church, it is asked, when a fixed pastor is to be chosen to a particular church, what office he shall be chosen to with respect unto the people of the other congregations? Not to a pastor's office, for he is not to be such to them. If he be chosen to be a ruling elder only, then besides that he hath two offices, he must have two choices and two ordinations. We choose him for our pastor, says the particular church he belongs to; and we, say the other, to rule us. And besides, the people have an interest of presence, and joining in fasting and prayer, at his ordination. And this therefore must be performed either in a panegyrical meeting of all, which cannot be as the practice is, or in all the several churches, which will multiply the ordination of him.

BOOK V.

The jurisdiction of synods debated.—That appeals are not necessary to the government of the churches, and therefore there is no necessity of synods upon that account.—What power may be allowed to a synod occasionally meeting to consider the maladministration of any particular church.—That they have not that grand prerogative of power given by Christ to excommunicate other churches, and so by that rod to enforce them to revoke their sentence of maladministration, and to receive a person wrongfully excommunicated by them. —The subordination of synods considered and refuted.—Though particular churches are not subject to the jurisdiction of synods, yet they are not wholly independent, but there is a communion which they ought to hold one with another.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning appeals; that they are not absolutely necessary to the government of the churches.

THAT appeals are not of absolute necessity to the government of the churches, and that the law of nature doth not necessarily require them, is apparent from these reasons:

1. In the first government under the law of nature there were no appeals in criminal causes, but Judah, the head of his family, peremptorily pronounceth the sentence, 'Let her be burnt,' Gen. xxxviii. And indeed, to whom then should any appeal have been made? Therefore appeals are not necessary by the light of nature.

2. The law of nature among the Jews required them not. The government was in the cities, and no appeals (in Deut. xvii. or elsewhere) in case of wrong were made by the injured party, but only in case of difficulty they had recourse to the judgment of the great sanhedrim to resolve cases that were too hard for them. And as for that instance of Moses, Exod. xviii. 22, that the great matters were brought to him and the small matters to other elders, it was a dividing of causes according to their sort and kind, and not a bringing of matters by way of appeal unto him.

3. Some of the reformed churches have no appeals, and yet are well governed, and in as much peace as those in Scotland. In Geneva there is but one consistory, and if there be any appeals in case of maladministration, they are made to the magistrate. And if it be said that it is so because they, being a commonwealth, and having supreme power, do bound the church power, yet still however, if the power of this our government would appoint magistrates to hear appeals of particular churches, and so bound their power in themselves (as the imperial towns in Germany or the cantons in Switzerland do), there is a great possibility to govern these churches without any other or further appeals in case of unjust sentences, as well as Geneva and other reformed churches are governed.

4. In matters of life and death in this kingdom there is no appeals, not such as to right the man if wronged, but every corporation hath the privilege touching the execution of the man to do it within themselves, and yet if in anything, *De morte hominis deliberandum est*, there is the greatest deliberation to be had about the life and death of a man; and yet this way of proceeding without appeals in such a case as this is not against the law of nature.

5. In democracies, where the sentence of life and death (as in many cases it was so) were referred to the immediate sentence of the people, there were no appeals; and yet such a government is not against the light of nature. Now, taking away of a man's life may well be conceived to be of as much moment as casting a man out of a church, for that deprives the subject of all ordinances for ever, and also of further time to repent; and yet incorporations and a recorder are betrusted with this, without the ordinary benefit of appeals to relieve the man; and therefore why may not a church, a company of saints, that hath the promise of Christ's presence to guide them, and which is a body to Christ, being sufficiently furnished with officers, having two or three elders over them, be as well betrusted in ecclesiastic administrations? Nor can it be supposed that God should take more care under the New Testament for relief of wrongs in churches scattered than he did in that national church of the Jews, which (as a nation) was capable of appeals, or that God, for the pretended relief of particular persons wronged, should subject whole churches, yea, provinces, to a coercive power armed with the dreadful sentence of excommunication in a national assembly.

(2.) That appeals are not absolutely necessary is evident, because if they were so they should be brought either antecedently to the sentence of excommunication in a particular church, or after it hath passed on the person excommunicated.

[1.] But that an appeal should not go before the sentence of excommunication, appears,

1. From the power and duty of that court to which the person's cause is first brought. The congregation that is told of the person's sin (according to Christ's institution, Mat. xviii. 17) hath the power of the censures, and Christ's command lies upon them to execute Christ's ordinance, if he hears not that church to whom the accusation of him is first brought; whereas, by an appeal afore, the sentence would be suspended, and so it would be in the power of an obstinate sinner to hinder the sentence from coming into act.

2. It is apparent from the good of the person. For, 1, if an appeal was thus brought antecedent to the sentence of excommunication passed in a particular church, then a man should never be obstinate until he came to the national assembly, and so he would want the means of his conversion all that while, which would be the ready way to harden him in his sin, to defer his repentance at least for a year; and then he must run through all the same course of admonitions by the higher courts ere they can pronounce the sentence. 2. Then God must wait upon and lacquey after men, and suspend a sentence till a man hath gone through all these courts on earth, and baffled both God's sentence and also man's.

[2.] That appeals are not to be made after the sentence of excommunication passed in a particular church appears,

(1.) From the nature of the sentence, which is decisive, and is irreversible, as being bound in heaven, unless the person repents, and upon his repentance is restored again.

(2.) Because a particular church, by yielding to such appeals, would give

up that power and authority with which Christ hath entrusted them. For Christ hath given them full power to exercise all acts of discipline within themselves (as hath been proved); but if they admitted of appeals to be made to a superior court, as having power over them, to disannul their acts, they would thereby acknowledge a supreme authority, and that they had not the perfect power in themselves.

2. If there may be such appeals, whether afore or after sentence (other than to relieve the person, and those we grant), then there should be a greater punishment for the appellant, if he be cast in the provincial assembly, and yet a greater also than that if he be cast again in the national. So it is in civil courts, and it deserves it here as much as in any, for a man becomes guilty of a greater sin by so appealing (if indeed he is criminal), for he is guilty of more obstinacy; if the appeal be afore the sentence, by hindering it, if after, by continuing more impudently impenitent, and in both cases in troubling all the churches. But these courts have no greater punishment to inflict than what the congregation or first church hath; for the man is by excommunication out of his own church, cast out of all churches as well as when cast by the national. They can only admonish and excommunicate at last, if the sentence be not passsed afore the appeal; or if the appeal be after the sentence, they can only pronounce the sentence to be just, they have no further or more grievous excommunication for him. There is indeed a final excommunication with a curse, *Anathema Maranatha* (1 Cor. xv. 22), to him that loves not (which is a diminutive), that is, that shews hatred against the Lord Christ after enlightening, and so hath sinned against the Holy Ghost; but we believe that such an excommunication is not that which upon appeals to the national assembly (if the person be cast there also), they shall have power to inflict. In the case indeed of eternal damnation, every degree for every sin is another hell added to the former (not an increase of torment by a circumstance, but substantially), but it is not so here, for every new sentence of these gradual courts add not a new degree of excommunication. Whereas excommunication is a giving up to Satan, if the congregation excommunicating gave up to one devil, and the classical to more, and the provincial assembly to more, and then the national to worse than the former (as in the Gospel Christ says of a man apostatising, that seven devils worse than before enter into the man), then these courts might arrogate such appeals to them, and proportionably punish the person's obstinacy who wrongfully makes them; but the case is otherwise. If it be replied that the shame is increased, that he is rebuked by so many, and that is a punishment; and that as Christ's death is aggravated by the shame, so here the excommunication is made the more shameful in the national than it would have been in the lesser assembly. The answer is, 1, That still that which is of the substance of this spiritual punishment, and which is spiritual in it, and in which the spirit of it lies, is not, nor cannot be, added unto, viz.; God's binding the man in heaven, which God did, and doth as much upon the first excommunication as upon the second or third; and as for Satan's power to terrify him, he is as much delivered thereby to it, and he is as much cast out of the ordinances in all churches by it, as by the confirmation of the sentence in the national assembly. And what is that outward shame of it (such as follows upon all other civil crimes made public), to be compared with these, or to correspond to that further proportion of authority, that these higher courts, by challenging of appeals to be made to them, do seem to usurp, as if an answerable degree of spiritual punishment were by God's promise ministered in them? And if there should not be a further punishment unto the appellant, then it comes all to one with what we affirm; for if it be in order to relieve the party

only, we acknowledge appeals in those respects to be useful to, by declaring the sentence null, and that there was no due or just excommunication. And if it be a just sentence, we acknowledge appeals so far to be made to neighbour churches, that they may declare it is a just excommunication already past. So that what we contend against is this, when under the colour of appeals they challenge to themselves a juridical power, to rescind sentences, to have the power of excommunication as much as the churches that do excommunicate, to oppose or stop any church inferior from proceeding; and in a reverence to this their power, to give liberty to any person offending, to appeal before sentence unto them to judge of it, and to pronounce it.

3. The liberty of such appeals, afore or after sentence, through all those gradual remedies, of classical, provincial, national (which we conceive should be rather for matters of doctrine, than for the relief of persons of all sorts; and they should deal in generals rather than in such particulars, as themselves are more general assemblies), will breed great inconveniences. As,

1. Either the lower churches must spare many gross offenders in a nation, that there may be few excommunications, and so prevent occasions of appeals (and then they would not take away the dishonour done to Christ by multitude of scandals), or else, if the lower churches be faithful in proceeding against all such offenders, yet by setting up three such courts over them for gradual appeals, with liberty to appeal to them, there will, instead of relieving particular persons, be occasioned the greatest trouble and cumber to these assemblies in multitude of causes depending; for who will not appeal, knowing at last he can be but excommunicated? And they must despatch these causes either by committees only (and so to do, is to reduce the supreme judgment to a fewer company of elders than were in the first classis or provincial synods that judged it, besides that it is a mere delegated power which such committees exercise), or else they must trust the lower courts wholly, and proceed according to their sentence; and then to what end are such appeals? Surely the highest national court cannot deny to hear any man that appeals to them, and if they will hear all that will appeal, they will be filled with them; and that will prove vexatious both to the persons and churches appealing, and will be impossible to be despatched. And besides, no man being to be excommunicated, but upon impenitency, which may be where the fact is acknowledged and confessed, and yet the church not satisfied with the repentance (for an undue outward formal confession will easily be acknowledged not to be that upon which churches should forbear excommunication, in case the fact be scandalous, it being a godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, that is required of men in such a case), may therefore proceed justly to excommunication, because they judge that he repents not, though the appealer says he doth repent; and then the trial will be of the man's repentance, performed at his confession, whether it be godly or no, which how can any judge of but upon their own having seen it, or putting the man to a new repentance afresh upon a reiterated admonition by them, and how then will a national assembly so easily be able to judge of it? And if they could, yet if they hear all things as fully over again, as all the inferior courts did (or how shall they judge to the satisfaction of the appellant?), what work would this create to all such assemblies! It was objected against the bishops' extensive power over so many congregations, that they had more churches, and so more business to come before them, than any one man could or themselves did manage, and therefore had their archdeacons and chancellors, and the like under them; but a national assembly will have much more to do, and yet it sits not as the Sanhedrim, all the year, but only a few weeks. To discourage men from those appeals at last by banishment,

&c., if cast, is to eke out the spiritual power with the temporal. A sufficient spiritual remedy is sought for, and it must be within itself; for that of the magistrate is but external, though helpful, and we seek a sufficient government, that was in the primitive times, when there was no Christian magistrates.

2. Such national assemblies, in a due proportion, should rather have work suited to their constitution, viz., national reformation, and advices to the magistrate about that which is common to all churches in the nation (and they will find enough of it in all times), than every man's personal cause by way of appeal (that hath a mind to appeal), to come afore them; even as civil assemblies, parliaments, &c., do not admit ordinary appeals from all courts in this kingdom, but leave them to these courts, the kingdom affording matters of far greater moment for their cognisance.

3. These appeals still being made from one ecclesiastical court to another, and those superior (when the cause is out of the congregation's hands), consisting most of pastors, or if of others, yet of persons ecclesiastical (for as such they sit in those assemblies, being homogeneal members of presbyteries, and lay elders you will not call them), by this means all causes are taken up into the clergy's hands, abstracted from the people; and the clergy will take part one with another, and the one ratify what the lower hath done, as the high commission did what a particular bishop had done, against an inferior minister or other.

4. When the cause comes to the national assembly, whose power is purely ecclesiastical, either the appeals must rest here and go no further, and the civil magistrate, if he back their sentence with a civil mulct, must, without his examining of the cause, judge as they have determined it; and so the temporal power must pursue and execute the decrees of the spiritual, by an implicit faith (which was the bondage the secular powers were in unto the popish bishops in those times); or else they also must take full cognisance of the cause, and have a power to redress and rectify the wrong, if they find all these courts to have injured a person, perhaps differing in judgment, or the like. And then it must either be the supreme power, the high court of parliament (and then that honourable court must be filled with all men's ecclesiastical appeals), or it must be some lesser ordinary court of magistracy inferior, which shall have power to correct the wrong; and we believe the national assembly will very hardly subject their sentence to their power, to rescind and declare it to be unjust, so as to be bound by the magistrates' power on them to recall it; and yet, otherwise, it is in vain to appeal at all to the magistrate. One of these ways must be taken, or else the civil magistrates must be denied to have appeals in such cases brought to them, but all be left in the church's hands, and the benefit of appeals made to them altogether be cut off.

5. If the king and parliament should, in the judgment of the national assembly, aggrieve you in point of religion, may appeals be made to the national assembly therein? Will you appeal to the national assembly against them? Whether our brethren will not decline that answer that was given by one of the brethren in the debate, why should we be afraid to affirm they might appeal to them, we know not; but we cannot see how the principles of the presbyterial government can avoid the asserting of it. Surely that independency so opprobriously ascribed to us, and retorted on us, is with submission to the magistrate, and an obedience by suffrage, without appealing further, we professing not to know any spiritual power on earth, to which an appeal may be made from the sentence of the magistrate, especially if it be the supreme authoritative magistrate. Though we acknowledge a relation to

no other ecclesiastical authority that hath a coercive power *sub pœna excommunicationis*, or of delivering unto Satan, yet we own a subjection to an assembly of other churches, as occasion is, and that as to an ordinance of Christ. But now, to set up a national assembly, growing up from the ecclesiastical state, as a court to whom appeals may be made from the sentence of the supreme magistrate itself, is so transcendent a way of independency, not negatively only, as knowing no superior, but affirmatively also, subjecting the civil power to the church, as the other deserves not the name of it. And if, from the civil power, appeals may be made to such assemblies, then they have the authority over it, such as under the notion of appeals is contended for. They will have a power to convent, yea, to excommunicate, and that as a joint body or parliament.

CHAPTER II.

What power synods composed of the elders of particular churches, occasionally assembled, have in case of maladministration by any particular church.

As we acknowledge elective occasional synods of the elders of many churches, as the churches have need to refer cases of difference to them, so in case of maladministration, or an unjust proceeding in the sentence of excommunication and the like, we acknowledge appeals or complaints may be made to other churches; and the elders of those churches met in a synod, who being offended may, as an ordinance of Christ, judge and declare that sentence to be null, void, and unjust; and that not simply, as any company of men may so judge, giving their judgments of a fact done, but as an ordinance of Christ in such cases, and for that end sanctified by him to judge and declare in matters of difference. And the church and eldership of a particular church, that proceedeth so unjustly, ought to look at this their determination as an ordinance of Christ to them; and, entertaining it as such, more sadly to review their own act and proceedings, to consider the grounds which the synod gives why it is unjust, and themselves ought to acknowledge it such, and receive the brother again, with acknowledgment of their sin, and of the wrong done him; yet not with an implicit faith, because the synod hath so determined, as having a greater power from Christ to restore the man.

In case this church will not own this person thus wrongfully ejected, these churches, or any of them, upon this determination of their elders (the churches at their return approving their sentence), may both receive the party in among themselves, and so relieve the man; and further, also profess to hold no communion with that church, if they perceive that church doth continue obstinate, having either for the manner proceeded therein against the common principles of equity and right (such as in judging of matters of fact, civil courts proceed by, as when matters are not sufficiently proved, &c.), or against and besides the principles whereby churches are to proceed (as for the matter of excommunication itself), which that church itself hath, and doth hold forth and profess.

If it fall out that a person be thus cast, first by his own church, and now by a synod of many churches, to whom he referred his cause and appealed, he is bound rather to sit down than *cursitare* (as Cyprian's word and advice is), run up and down, still to other and greater number of churches, and to suffer wrong rather (as in 1 Cor. vi. the apostle in another case exhorts) than engage churches against churches (which may prove the event) in his own private quarrel.

In Christian commonwealths, appeals may be made in all such cases of

wrong to the magistrate, as to the other churches, the subject-matter of excommunication being but such things as are against the common profession of Christianity, in doctrine and manners, and not the niceties and curiosities in theology, and such as the laws of the magistrate approve of; and the manner of proceeding for the proof of the fact being the same that are to be in all other courts civil.

Now these things being premised and acknowledged by us, we proceed to the negative part, what power we deny to synods in point of maladministrations, which our brethren would give them; and herein the points in difference are three.

1. We deny them to have power to rescind a sentence, but only doctrinally to judge a sentence of excommunication to be void and unjust. Now the power to rescind a sentence, according to the acceptation of the words, imports, 1, An act of the same kind of ministerial power that gave the sentence. It imports the same power to make it void that did establish it; yea, a power containing in it all that the inferior hath, and is withal superior to it. The Christian magistrate hath a power over churches, in case of wrong, not only to declare the sentence to be unjust, as he is a Christian magistrate, but to cause that church that pronounced it to revoke it as such; but yet the assembly will not own that they have power to rescind the sentence, as they say synods may. Therefore this word (as in synods the assembly would place the power of it) must import not simply power of judging and declaring the sentence unjust, for that is refused; but further, a power of the same kind, and yet superior, by virtue of which the sentence is made void, *coram ecclesia*, before the church, and is now so to be conceived of all. And as in the act of the church that excommunicated the man, there was a further power put forth than a bare declaration that he was to be excommunicated; for they actually, with the power of Christ, did cast out and deliver the man to Satan; so here, in this act that bears the name of rescinding, there must be supposed a power not simply to declare the sentence unjust, but further, a power upon their sentence to make void the other's act, that the person before excommunicated stands now *coram ecclesia*, unexcommunicated.

2. A second power which we deny to synods, which is contended for by our brethren, which also the word *rescind* imports, is the like coercive power in this synod given them by Christ, whereby to compel this church to acknowledge their sentence unjust, and to receive that brother again. And the punishment by which they are enabled to compel them to it, must be of the same kind with that which these supposed inferior churches have over their members, if they did not obey; namely, to excommunicate and deliver up to Satan that church, classis, or province, that hath thus unjustly proceeded, and will not receive this man in again, upon their rescinding it. And this it imports in the sense of our brethren, for otherwise they do but intend that government in these cases to be in synods, which we the dissenting brethren contend for; which is, that these synods, and the churches under them, may in some cases withdraw a communion from other churches offending, but not presume to excommunicate, or deliver them to Satan, or unchurch them; and lay a law upon their consciences to shut up their church meetings, and to be all heathens and publicans to one another, as well as to their synod and their churches. And yet this which we contend for is cried down with this common prejudice, that it is no government, because their power of excommunication is wanting. Again, when they restore the party wronged, is it to their communion only, or to the communion of that church out of which he was excommunicated also? If only to their own, then still it is no more than what we acknowledge neighbour churches may do in case of

wrong, and it is a relief to the party. But if also they have power to restore him to the church he was cast out of actually, then they must have power to compel that church to receive him. In this case these whole churches and their officers would be subjects to be dealt with by these synods; for, 1, the appellant wronged is one party, and they another; and, 2, the excommunication was a public church act, wherein the elders and the people are involved, especially when they all stand to own him, and* to execute the sentence.

3. A third thing wherein we differ is concerning matters of appeals, we taking them as importing, in the sense of our brethren, a juridical superior power, in the superior synods to be appealed unto. Concerning which we say, 1, that such appeals are not so absolutely necessary to the government of the churches, nor doth the law of nature necessarily require them; 2, especially not such appeals as should acknowledge a superior power in the synod appealed unto, either by making the appeal afore the sentence is given in particular churches, and so the matter is taken out of their hands, by virtue of a superior power in synods, or by making the appeal after sentence given, we deny them to be such fixed and solemn courts of judicature.

First, As for that rescinding power pretended, if more than declarative is intended, we conceive that the nature of the sentence of excommunication, when untimely executed, is such, that by whatever court (that is the first subject of pronouncing it) it is pronounced and executed, it is not capable of being rescinded. It is capable of being declared void, null, or unjust; but not of being rescinded, in the sense afore explained. In matters civil, one court having a superior power may in a true and proper sense rescind the sentence of another, because it hath a proper power of the same kind, by virtue of which it can make that act void which stood before by virtue of the inferior power as valid, each act depending upon that power which on earth is set up; and so the greater may undo and reverse what the former did. But thus to rescind a sentence of excommunication, no power on earth is able to do. Which is evinced thus:

There are two parts of that sentence, one outward, which the church performs (which is ejection out of communion), the other inward, which God accompanies the sentence with. And if the sentence were formally no more but a casting out of the outward communion of the church on earth, then a greater power in earth might have power to rescind their sentence, and restore him to communion; but there is a further judicial act annexed unto it, which is binding in heaven, and delivering to Satan, &c., which must be supposed a special judicial act of God. Such man's sin is in some sense bound in heaven, till he repents, when he commits it, and is admonished by any Christian, whether he be in the church or no, and whether he be brought before the church or no for it; and so the brethren that admonish him in order to excommunication, may be said, in some sense, to bind his sin. But there is a further judicial act of God's put forth, when the church hath ministerially sentenced the man aright; for the church so binds sin as no private brother can, or else it might be said, that a brother may deliver to Satan. Hence that assembly, which is the first subject of this power from God, hath the promise of this, and God is supposed by us to have performed it upon their sentence; and then it is impossible there should be a superior power of the same kind on earth to rescind it, or unbind it in heaven, and to whom a further promise is made, that when they pronounce it void there is an unbinding in heaven. So as suppose the congregational or classical church (be

* Qu. 'to own and'?—Ed.

it either the one or the other that is acknowledged the first subject of this power; and which of these should be, could never yet be brought to the debate) hath bound the man, and the provincial confirms it, and binds him also, if the national hath power to rescind this, it hath then one key to unloose what these three keys have locked. The answer to this is only that this argument goes upon a false supposition, that appeals should be when the excommunication is just, whereas they are only when the appeal is unjust, and so the sin is not bound in heaven. To which it is replied,

1. In case of appeals. That is the thing still in question between the parties, whether it be just or unjust? And therefore to suppose that all appeals fall out only in cases of real injustice and wrong, cannot be a sufficient answer. Yea,

2. The sentence is to be judged by all the churches (till the matter is examined and cleared to the contrary) to be a right sentence of excommunication, and that his sin is bound in heaven: for they are rather to judge that the church hath proceeded rightly, than to judge on the appellant's side, until the matter is cleared. And so still it goes up as a sentence binding in heaven.

3. Whether the sentence be just or unjust, the matter is capable of no more than declaring and adjudging it such accordingly; and therefore it is capable of no such act as may be called rescinding. For if it be just, no sentence on earth can rescind God's act upon that first sentence, for it is bound in heaven, and man cannot alter God's act; and if it be unjust, then there needs no power to rescind it, but only to declare it to be unjust and void, and so to hold the man as if he had never been excommunicated. And if synods have but such a declarative power, then let no more be affirmed, and we will not contend about it.

4. If they have power of rescinding the sentence, then the act done by the inferior courts is made void by their sole sentence, without any act of reversing, by the consent of those congregations or churches that have pronounced it. For no superior court hath that power to rescind the sentence of another, but hath it so, as by their act the sentence is made void, without any act of revocation by the lower court. Thus the honourable house of parliament, if it rescinds an act of an inferior court, sends not down to that inferior court to reverse it, but doth it without them. And if that be the intent of this rescinding, let it be so declared.

CHAPTER III.

The other prerogative of power challenged by synods, to excommunicate other churches, considered and invalidated.

The second prerogative of power challenged by synods, which we contend against, and deny to them, is such a coercive power to be in them, as given them by Christ, to excommunicate other churches, and so by that rod to enforce them to revoke their sentence of maladministration, and receive a person wrongfully excommunicated by them.

That such a power is not in synods to excommunicate a church or churches, or so rescind a sentence passed in a particular church, is evinced by these following arguments.

1. For such a pretended power, there is neither precept nor example.

(1.) The apostles never did exercise such a power, who yet had power in all churches, and over persons among them.

(2.) None of the reformed churches ever practised it. Mr Paget, a learned presbyterial writer, acknowledgeth that none of the reformed churches ever practised it. Mr Cartwright, speaking of this power, did in his days put an *if it may be* upon it.

If it be said their government is so good, as it hath had no occasion to put such a power into act: I answer,

Let the Arminian congregation, that were in the low countries, be remembered. Though a national synod was called, yet none of them were excommunicated; and yet we believe they judged their errors worthy of their censure. So the churches of anabaptists among them, who not only hold the not baptizing of children, but run into many other gross errors, were never yet excommunicated.

If it be said that they forbear to do it, because of great inconveniences that would follow, by provoking of multitudes; and that it tends more (in such cases) unto edification to forbear it, than to execute it; it is replied,

1. That God hath suited his ordinances to the ordinary way of his providence, and therefore would not have given an ordinary standing power for government, which could not ordinarily be executed without tumult and disturbance; and therefore there is no such power given.

2. If a church or churches did deserve it, it cannot be for edification to forbear it; for not to excommunicate them is to edify them in sin. Churches that deserve excommunication, can be edified in nothing by being connived at in their sin, that will damn them. And excommunication is the means appointed by God for the destroying the flesh and saving the soul.

3. Neither can a multitude be an excuse for the neglect. For, however, these synods (if they have such a power) are to discharge their duty, and the soul or souls of sinners must thus be punished.

4. Let it be observed, that such a power is contended for by the presbyterial divines which was never practised, which themselves think and judge inconvenient to practise; and yet without this power granted to them, they say there is no government. And herein lies the main of this great controversy, whether they should have such a power or no, which they never have exercised; and themselves think it to be ordinarily inconvenient to exercise it, reserving it as a rod in the house which they never will use, as if they kept it to scare children with. But the efficacy of government lies not in the speculation and doctrine, but in what is practicable. Shall kingdoms be disturbed about the dispute of that which in the practice is a chimera, and when they have it, shall be exercised arbitrarily, and at discretion? Yea, may not a trial be made, whether that the other way (which they call no government) may not be sufficient?

We further conclude this first head of argument with this, that as such a synodical power hath no precedent or example in the primitive practices, nor in the reformed churches, so it hath this character upon it, that none but the pope and bishops, and synods of bishops, ever practised it; and they have practised it by interdicting kingdoms, not simply as civil states, but as churches in kingdoms, commanding the ministers to forbear to administer the holy things unto any that did cleave to their prince, or for any the like causes. And certainly, by the principles of this doctrine, a general council of all the reformed churches may in like manner excommunicate any nation or kingdom whom they judge heretical, or to make a schism from them; for whilst the foundation of the power of synods is pleaded to lie in Christ's institution, as it hath ordinarily been urged in the assembly in answer unto our reasons, that the church catholic is one politic body, and so the elders

of all churches have power over any churches that are parts of that great body, be they in nations or in provinces; which subjects all states as truly to the thunderbolt of excommunication from foreign churches, as it did once to Rome.

What though it be said that such counsels are not likely to be practised; or if so, it must be with the states' own consent. Yet still the mystery is, that such a power is contended for as a rod over them, as well as over lesser churches; for though they have not excommunicated, *de facto*, any particular churches, yet they have claimed that power as a rod to keep them in awe with.

If it be said, the pope challenged to do this as an head of the church universal, and as infallible, we reply, that there is indeed this difference, that he, as but one, usurps it, and as the external head of the church; but yet these challenge the same power, as being themselves the catholic church itself representatively. For if to tell the church, Mat. xviii., be in its ascent to tell general councils as the church, then they must be interpreted to be the catholic church, and infallibility may in the issue (through men's pride) become the claim also, by how much many consenting are more likely to have the Holy Ghost to assist them, than that, and so have more reason for their claim than one set up to challenge it. And at first, that one was set up only to receive appeals, and to rescind sentences, and to excommunicate churches; and from granting to them that power at the first, did that other of infallibility spring.

A second head of arguments is drawn from the nature of excommunication, because that it contains more in that, than that which we call non-communion, namely this, that persons are not only cast from communion with all these churches (which we acknowledge), but further, are delivered to Satan for the internal part thereof. And for the external part, it is strange that this law of synods should oblige their conscience, that they should not meet among themselves, whenas yet they are already a church, and were a church without any power derived from their associating with others. All then that they can fall from by virtue of the sentence of the synod, is but what they have from them and among them by their association, and not what they have among themselves. Yea, the very words whereby excommunication is expressed is but this, *Sit tibi ethnicus*, 'Let him be to thee an heathen,' and 'Take that wicked one from among you'; and therefore when neighbour churches deal so with a church, they can but eject and keep them and their members out from amongst them. But this power contended for goes further, for the synod assumes to throw a church out of itself, and to make them to be heathens and publicans *inter se*, among themselves, who yet have all this while been a church.

And that which further strengthens all this, is that very principle which the assembly doth go upon to establish this power in synods and presbyteries (given up in their answer to our reasons against presbyteries), that as families are bound to join into some congregational church, so those churches into association together; and as these joined in a new congregation gives them power over each other, so this association of churches gives the whole a power over each of these churches. Though we wholly assent not to this latter, yet supposing it (and it is one of the best and fairest grounds for the presbyterial way), the law of this principle (if the parallel be rightly made up) will not extend to a power of excommunicating any of these churches so associated. For, 1, if you take that external part of excommunication, it is a cutting men off from all ordinances wherein church communion lies (as some hold), but more especially from the sacrament of the Lord's supper

(which latter is acknowledged by all); for since suspension cuts off from the Lord's supper, therefore excommunication must do it much more. Now the parallel law between these two kinds of associations must run thus, that as a congregation casts out of the communion of all those ordinances which a congregation is the proper seat of, so this greater association can by virtue of its association only cast out of those ordinances that belong unto them, as such an associated body in common, and from among themselves in particular; and then that sentence can arise to no more than what we contend to be the only power that churches have one with another, and that is non-communion. The reason is clear, because they can but cast that church out of their association, and from having any interest in their counsel and advice, &c., for associated presbyteries have not the sacraments, nor the solemn constant ordinances of worship, and therefore they can but by virtue of this association deny them communion with themselves; and this we grant to neighbour churches, that they may and ought to deal thus with an offending church, by virtue of that apostolic rule, 'From such turn away.' But this power of excommunicating a church contended for is a further thing: it is a laying a law upon a church, to dissolve their being any longer a church, until they do repent of that sin they charge them with; it is to call in their charter, that they can meet no more *inter se*, among themselves, to enjoy the sacrament, or any other ordinance whatsoever. This is beyond the extent of the power of an association; yea, this is more than they are able to execute; and doth Christ give power to do that which they cannot execute? Now they may keep them from communion with them, either by not letting them into the assembly (and therefore they had *ostiarii*, door-keepers, in the primitive times), or they may do it by thrusting them out, as the priests of Israel did the king when he came to offer sacrifice; or rather by a moral contest against them, or forbearing to communicate when they are present; but they cannot keep them from meeting *inter se*, among themselves. In the primitive times, indeed, they had recourse to the power of magistrates for it, but we seek for a sufficient ecclesiastical remedy.

To this, if it be retorted, that such will the case be too when in a particular congregation a company of persons deserving excommunication are ejected (as a pastor, and others with him), yet they will meet still, and no law can oblige them to the contrary; we reply by giving this difference of the case.

1. That when a congregation doth cast out the very members, the act itself, whereby they cast them out from among them, leaves them barely a company of outlaws, without church state or relation among themselves; for they had it but as members of that church they are now cast out of; and they can retain no other relation left them that gives them actual right to ordinances, for this is their original first relation. And therefore if they meet, yea, with a mutual consent to be a new church, they meet as men, and outlawed from a church relation which they had put their souls upon the laws of, or at least, by a judicial act passed on them, they have now forfeited. They fall as the angels from that original state, and if they will set up a new kingdom, they do it but as the devils do. But although neighbour churches did cast them out from among them, that act, in the nature and extent of it, reacheth not to cast them out of that relation of a church that they had originally among themselves; neither do they fall by virtue of that act (which is all that is in the Synod's power) from that church relation they had among themselves, which they had before their associating with them, and was the foundation of it.

2. By that act of being cast out of this congregational relation, they are cast out of the formerly enjoyed communion of the Lord's supper, in a con-

stancy in that church, which they never enjoyed at all in that other classical church, for it is not the seat of it. And so this act of excommunication, as in a congregational church performed, casts them out of all ordinances, and out of all that is proper to such relation and fellowship; but it is not so in the other case. And hence it comes to pass that excommunication from all ordinances can only be in a church where all ordinances are; and therefore not in or by a classical church, where the main ordinances men are shut out from are not administered.

3. This act of a synod's excommunicating a church is yet further, for the external part of it, not simply an obligation not to meet for ordinances, and to account of each other as heathens, but further yet, the sentence terminates itself upon their church fellowship and communion, dissolves that, cuts them off from being an external body or spouse to Christ, gives them such a bill of divorce as removes the candlestick, takes that in pieces, yea, delivers them as such to Satan, and makes them as heathens and publicans each to other. For otherwise, if the act be only the synod's putting away this church from among themselves, or the communion of other churches, that we readily grant may be done, and surely it is remedy sufficient, through Christ's blessing, (although this is reckoned no government). But to do the other act mentioned to church or churches, Christ hath not given power to synods.

If it be answered, as it is by some, that the object of this excommunication of a church is only the persons therein materially considered, but not their church state, otherwise than by consequence, we reply, that formally, the object of this sentence is a church as such, which is evident from this, that the great argument alleged by the presbyterial divines is, that else there is no remedy for an erring church as well as for heretical persons; and also that the sins which are the grounds of such excommunications be still church acts, public, not personal, as grossly evil administrations, or permissions of notorious sins, or heresies professed, upheld, defended, adhered to by all in their assemblies. And how else should excommunication of a church differ from the suspension of a church? This puts them into that state, as during the time of their excommunication they are to be reckoned as no church until they repent; for if they are as heathens and publicans, then they are no church, unless we will make heathen churches, which is a contradiction. And if that whole church should die impenitent, they are to be reckoned to die as out of church state among themselves, as well as in relation to other churches.

Now, to prove that it is not in the power of synods thus to do to churches, let the following reasons be considered.

1. This is a maxim of the reformed churches, that *ecclesiæ sunt pares*, churches are equal, and *par in parem non habet potestatem*, one equal hath not power over another. Admonish they may, withdraw communion they may; for as one brother may do so from another, so these churches may from an erring church; yea, and a synod being an ordinance to them to heal them, and consisting of more elders than are in that church, they may declare Christ's command and will to them, but yet they have not power to deliver to Satan, to unchurch them, &c. We find not that a synod or company of elders are called a church, and if they should be so named, yet still they have not more of church in them than other churches have; nay, they have less, for they want a body of the faithful, and their interest joined with these elders, who are more usually called the church. They are not the seat of the main ordinances for which churches were constituted, they have not the sacraments administered, they are not bodies erected primarily for worship, but only so far as may occasionally accompany and subserve their discus-

sions and determinations. It would therefore be strange that these should have so much more of church in them, as to have power to unchurch other churches and bodies to Christ, when themselves are but representative at most of the body of Christ (for Christ hath no representative body to him), but every church consisting of elders and people are the body of Christ, and so called, when the other never hath that name.

2. To dissolve a church's external estate as to all ordinances is a matter so far above excommunicating single persons, though never so many, that it is Christ's prerogative alone to do it. This is confirmed,

(1.) By like instances in civil states, wherein to dissolve an incorporate town, and to call in and take away their charter and privilege, belongs to the supreme power; and though judges and others may deal with persons in corporations, yet the corporations themselves depend on the crown.

(2.) It is confirmed by Scripture, Rev. ii. 5. Christ from heaven makes it his prerogative to remove the Ephesian candlestick: 'Repent, or I will come quickly and remove thy candlestick.' The candlestick was their church state: Rev. i. 23, 'The seven candlesticks are the seven churches;' and therefore he speaks not of their mystical state as they were members of the mystical body, but of them as they were a candlestick artificially formed up into that holy fellowship amongst them. So also it was God's prerogative alone to give a bill of divorce to Israel as she was a church, and so it is expressed. And if it be said it was done ministerially, by the prophets declaring it, and so may this also be done to a church by its ministers, we reply, that it was done by them prophetically, as foretelling it; but there is no such spirit of prophecy in synods.

(3.) It is Christ's prerogative alone to build and erect a church, without the intervention of ministerial ecclesiastical power to derive power to them; therefore also to dissolve that fellowship, and the use thereof, belongs only to him. Churches to be erected may and ought to have the direction and consent of neighbour churches, because a new sister is to be added to, and associated with them, but they receive no power from them to become a church. It was not the intervention of the apostles' power that constituted churches, further than as they converted materials for churches to be made out of, and as they directed and taught them to become bodies unto Christ, teaching them to do whatsoever Christ hath commanded them; but we never read that making them churches was a ministerial act in them; we read they ordained elders, but not that they ordained churches. Paul says he planted indeed, and he was a wise master builder; but he speaks the one of converting persons, the other of doctrines, because he speaks of building hay and stubble afterwards.

It is the great error of some of this age, that having lost all church state and ministry, therefore, say they, there must come apostles to make churches again; whereas if all ordinances had been lost under antichrist, yet if there be saints alive, and they have the apostles' writings, those writings do authorise them as fully to become a church, and choose ministers, and then to ordain them, as if the apostles were alive. Moses was not the builder of the national church of the Jews, but Christ immediately did it, and not merely gave directions: Heb. iii. 3, 'This man Christ hath more honour than Moses, inasmuch as he that builded the house hath more honour than the house,' whereof Moses was but a part himself.

If it be answered to all this, that by excommunication their fundamental church state is not dissolved, as the character of a brother or of a minister is not so defaced when excommunicated; but that, if he repent again, he remains a minister without a new ordination; we reply, Besides the reasons

fore-mentioned, that so likewise if Christ should remove the candlestick and unchurch any, if they repent their church-state would be restored; and 2, if they be thrown out of their own church by excommunication, this church-state must remain as it were in the air, as an accident without a subject; and 3, if they be cast out of the visible church, which is the greater, by excommunication, then they are cast out of the less also.

It may, and hath been said, that in cases of maladministrations, wherein churches have miscarried and erred, though synods have the power of excommunication in such cases, yet it is not necessary for the rectifying of that evil that they should proceed against the church, so as the church should be the object of their dealing with; but it may be enough for them to deal with persons only that are scandalous, whom the church will not amend; and that then, in case of the church's neglect, they may excommunicate those persons.

Now unto this we reply, that in these cases of evil administrations, what power synods are to be trusted withal is to be primarily, or at least as much, exercised upon the church that hath miscarried and neglects its duty as upon the persons; and therefore it will not salve it that they should let the church alone, or deal more lightly with them, and so take upon them to excommunicate the persons whom the church neglects to excommunicate. Which is made good by these reasons.

1. From the privilege and power of that church, be it classical or congregational, that is the first subject of excommunication; they have the power first from Christ to do it, and a command so to do, and the duty lies on them. And therefore synods are to call upon them, and to provoke them to do it who have that power committed to them, and not to take it out of their hands; for synods are not to assume more power than the apostles did. When the church of Corinth had neglected to excommunicate the incestuous Corinthian, Paul did not take it upon him and excommunicate him himself; but in this case he deals with the church for not doing their duty, because the power of judging was committed to them: 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' 1 Cor. v. 12. He blames them, lays it upon them as a sin, and if they had still continued in that neglect, their sin had been as great as that of the man himself, and greater. And therefore, Christ also in his epistle from heaven to the church of Thyatira, Rev. ii. 20, blames that church and the angel thereof for suffering Jezebel to teach, and lays the sin upon them in this case, as well as upon Jezebel herself. And therefore, if synods are to excommunicate at all, and have power to excommunicate the persons, they must proceed against the church also.

(1.) If it be said that the church must be supposed not to see that reason, for want of light, to excommunicate a member or members, that the synod doth, and so they may not have that cause to deal with the churches that they have with the person or member; we reply, that if the sin be not evidently notorious in all men's eyes, deserving excommunication, but such as it may be well supposed the inferior church might not see ground for excommunication, why should the synod meddle with cases of that nature, why should they not rather rest in the sentence of those inferior courts? And if it be such a sin as is notorious, and the scandal answerably, then, surely, this church that person belongs unto is as much, yea more, in fault for their neglect or partiality. And surely synods, if they had any such authority, being such great and superior bodies, should not intermeddle but in cases suitable to themselves, in cases of moment, great and manifest to all men's consciences.

And (2) the constitution of synods, and the relation they bear to churches,

argues it. They are not as *totum integrale*, but *collectivum*, not an integral whole; they are not *ecclesia integralis*, but *collectiva*, not an integral church, but collective; that is, they are in our brethren's intent a church of churches, if a church at all, and not in an immediate way a church of the members of those churches singly and apart considered. Their first and primary relation is therefore to the churches as a part of that whole, and but secondarily unto the members; and they are therefore accordingly to deal in all such cases of omission with the churches. Their work is to have the care and cure of churches, and their miscarriages; and therefore, to deal with members only, and let the churches alone, is to neglect that which is their proper charge.

(3.) So it was in the government of Judah; the Sanhedrim did not themselves meddle with the person to be judged, and pronounce the sentence instead of the judges of a particular city, but left it to them still to judge, according to their proper privilege, but dealt with the judges in case they pronounced not the sentence. And so here it should be, if we will suppose any such power at all to be in synods.

2. It may, and hath been said, that presbyterial government supposeth the fault of this excommunication to lie in the elders that excommunicated the man, and so need not deal with the churches by way of coercion to them, but only with those elders that had the hand in it, who may be deposed, and others placed in their room.

To which we reply, 1, That the people are supposed also at least to give their consent to the excommunication of a person in a church, by their own acknowledgment, and according to the practice of the reformed churches, yea, and are to judge, as the jury doth, by finding a man guilty; and the officers are as the judges; so in the church of Corinth, 1 Cor. v. vi., and if so, then they are to be judged in fault as well as the officers.

But, 2, if the people are not to be censured and judged, yet suppose they cleave to their officers in this act, as thinking that they ought, and as being convinced with them that this man is to remain excommunicated, and therefore dare not partake with him, as it is their duty in such a case, then the people are to be excommunicated as well as their officers, and both of them for this same thing, as being a church act according to their interests common to both.

3. If the officers only should be excommunicated in this case, and others put in their rooms, then, 1, if the people do cleave to their former officers, these officers will want a church to officiate unto; and why should they desert their elders, when they in their consciences judge their act to be just? It becomes them to say, Let us all die with them in such a case. And if the synod will excommunicate a pastor and the elders of a congregation (supposing the people cleave to them), where is it that you will excommunicate him? In their own church, or in your churches? In his own church the people are against it; and if in your churches, where is the people's concurring consent to this man's excommunication? And if it be done in your churches, you only throw him out of your own; or, 2, if they do not cleave to their officers, yet they conscientiously judging that they ought not to receive the man into communion with themselves, here is still no sufficient remedy for the man by this.

4. Let it be further considered, that if these elders only should be deposed, yet they are perhaps the whole, the greater part at least, of a classis (for by the greater part everything is carried), and so of the elders of many congregations; yea, if the provincial had seconded the sentence, then the greater part of the elders of a province are to be excommunicated also, and if the people cleave to them (as of old they did use to do to their bishops), then the

people of all those churches also must be excommunicated, and what a havoc of the churches will this make!

If it be said that in this case, as in a rebellion, some few are singled out for example to the rest, it is answered,

1. It is not in this as in civil government, for there capital punishments are chiefly for example, to prevent and deter others; but here this of excommunication is for the personal good of those that have sinned, to destroy the flesh that they may be saved, and therefore the souls that deserve it ought and must be excommunicated; neither is there any warrant to think that when the merit and obstinacy of the sin calls for that ordinance appointed, the only means to cure it (which cure is only to bring sinners to godly repentance), that that sin will be healed by any lower means of making others an example. The excommunication of some few may be a means to prevent those that are not fallen, but not those that are fallen into obstinacy. 2. In such civil mulcts, princes and states have power to pardon the rebels, or to pass the crime by, because the injury (so far as it is civil to themselves), but no ecclesiastical court hath power to forgive but where Christ forgives, and he forgives only the penitent; nor yet ought they to forbear if they have the power of inflicting this spiritual punishment.

Lastly, let the inconvenience be considered, if synods should excommunicate persons (when the inferior churches did acquit them) without excommunicating the churches themselves, what confusion and disturbance it is like to bring. The persons excommunicated will say, Where I am known and am a member, there I am acquitted and not meddled with; but by strangers and the elders of a nation (having taken the cause out of their hands) I am condemned. This will bolster up persons, and make them obstinate, and they will oppose sentence against sentence.

CHAPTER IV.

Arguments against subordination of synods to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction or government.—The first argument, that there is no warrant or designment of such a subordination in all the Scriptures.

Though we judge synods to be of great use for the finding out and declaring of truth in difficult cases, and encouraging to walk in the truth, for the healing offences, and to give advice unto the magistrate in matters of religion; and though we give great honour and conscientious respect unto their determinations; yet since not only an occasional but a standing use of them is asserted and maintained, and that in subordination of one unto another, as juridical ecclesiastical courts, and this in all cases, we humbly present these reasons against it.

All subordinations of these spiritual courts, having greater and lesser degrees of power, to which in their order causes are to be brought, must have the greatest and most express warrant and designment in the word for them. Whence it is argued thus.

Arg. 1. Those courts that must have the most express warrant and designment for them in the word, and yet have not the least, their power is to be suspected, and not erected in the church of God; but these have not the least: therefore, &c.

There ought to be the greatest and most express warrant, and that for two things belonging to them: 1, for their subordination and number; 2, for their bounds and limits of power; and because this principle is made use of

both in the point in hand and other of like nature, namely, to argue *à pari ratione*, from like and parallel reason, the argument to establish this proposition shall proceed accordingly from the strength of like reason in other cases and instances, that there ought to be a warrant and designment in the word for them.

1. From the like reason, in the case of subordination of officers in the church one over another, there was a special institution, and it is required, or we own them not; and that for intensive power and extensive power; and therefore for the subordination of such courts also. The rule of proportion holds; for a government of and by special subordinations, whether of one church officer or person over another, and of him over others, or of a many in the like degree of subordination, are but several forms of government, of which there is the like reason in common. As of subordinations in a monarchical way, wherein but some one person is superior to another downwards, or in an aristocratical way throughout, in this they come all to one; that if there be to be an institution or warrant for the one, there is to be for the other, whether God or men be to be the instituters of them. Now, in the government of the church for the subordination of officers, there was an express institution, or men ought not to have assumed it: 1 Cor. xii. 18, 'God hath set in his church, first apostles, secondarily prophets and evangelists' (who were of a parallel order), 'thirdly teachers;' and the difference of power in apostles and evangelists is by subordination; but Christ hath not set the like subordination of courts.

2. It is proved from what the presbyterial principles themselves reject. An institution is required by them in the case of subordination of bishops, archbishops, popes, in their arguing against them and their power; yea, and by the episcopal writers themselves, who, when it is objected that if there may be a bishop and an archbishop over them, why not a patriarch over archbishops, and a pope over all? they deny this, and reject a patriarch or pope (although these popes should renounce infallibility), as not warranted by the word. They say, an higher and more universal subordination alters the case. And the usual exception against this subordination of such church governors is, that in Scripture we read neither of the name of an archbishop, nor of the thing, and therefore not of a subordination. The like may be said of these; where read we of councils provincial, national, names, or things? Yea, and in this way of arguing (in this respect) the advantage is on this side rather; for we are sure that once there was in the church such a subordination in church officers, evangelists over pastors, apostles over evangelists (only they were extraordinary, and so no patterns). But of such subordinations of councils in an aristocratical way, there is nothing to be found.

3. It is argued from like and just reason, in other societies and bodies politic. In all kingdoms and commonwealths, well ordered and constituted, there is, and ought to be, a set and express order, by the laws, both of the number and bounds of courts of judicatory, from whom and to whom appeals are made, and in what cases, &c.; and that this subordination should be set forth and fixed by the law, is as necessary as the laws and rules by which men in a kingdom are to be governed. The wisdom of the law doth judge it not enough to appoint several kinds of officers, as to say, councillors, serjeants, judges; but designeth also and appoints several courts, with their power and bounds, the designment of which (especially standing courts being made up of these) is a matter of much more moment than the other. Yea, and still the greater and higher such courts and assemblies are, having amplitude of power over others, the more express evidence and warrant for their power there is and ought to be, as for parliamentary power, and the

privileges thereof. And this is evident, as from the example of all kingdoms, so from what the Scripture speaks of the constitution of them. Each part of the subordination of such power, in all government, both was and is called a creation of men in things human, whether it be in a monarchical or aristocratical way: 1 Pet. ii., 'Submit yourselves to every human creation.'

And he speaks there evidently of (and therefore thus styleth) the subordination of powers in a commonwealth, whether officers or courts; for it follows, 'whether unto the king as supreme, or unto governors, as those that are sent by him,' &c.; and so have subordinations of power under him. Now parallel, spiritual, and ecclesiastical government with this. As in the rearing of an human fabric, and contignation of power, there must be an ordinance or creation from man, when God hath left the framing of it (as in this case he hath), so this subordination being in divine power, there must be a divine institution of it, besides that of the distinction of the officers themselves.

4. It is argued with like reason from Christ's institution, Mat. xviii. If in a particular church Christ hath prescribed the several subordinations of proceedings, and set forth the degrees, bounds, and orders of them, then much more it is required in these, by how much a larger extent of power is committed to them. The first rule in Mat. xviii. for proceeding is, 'If thy brother offend thee, tell him thyself;' then, 2, 'Take two or three, and if he hear not them,' then, 3, 'tell the church.' If there were a thousand brethren in a congregation, a man were not bound, nor were it orderly in an ordinary and set way, to take, as the church shall please, first two or three, and then ten, and then twenty, and still the like proportion of a greater and greater number, ere he comes to the church itself. But Christ hath set the order, and his wisdom saw it meet thus to design and limit the proceedings in a particular church. And it had been much more necessary to have appointed the like about these more general and greater assemblies, because every one of these courts (intended) have the power of a sentence and judgment, whereas those two or three proceed but in a way of admonition, in order to a superior court. Shall he take care of congregations (which are esteemed the meanest), and not for these, of which, if he should not have set the bounds of power, and the subordination thereof, none would know what belongs to them, who is in fault, if offences be not corrected? Nor would any know whom first to appeal unto. I will appeal to the national assembly first, says one, and am not bound to the classical or provincial. Another would say, I will appeal to a general council, which can best judge, and will be sure to make an end of it. Why should any be hindered from going, *per saltum*, if Christ hath not set forth and obliged us to these subordinations in their order?

5. In the churches of the Jews, the subordinations that were, were set forth and determined by institution or example, how many courts there should be, and where to rest. There were the courts of the cities and the towns, and then their Sanhedrim, to which the cause was to be carried, if it were too hard for their particular courts, Deut. xvii. In the New Testament, we have, for removing scandals, a congregational standing court and government (or be it a classical standing presbytery, over many congregations, as our brethren say), and we have an example also of going out from a particular standing church, whether the one or the other, electively to another church or churches, when divisions are therein (which Acts xv. holds forth), but still for such standing subordinations and courts as these, out of this church, nothing at all. If there had been any national Sanhedrim, a set and constant judicatory, then Christ would have appointed it as he had done

before; but he hath not; no example, no constitution, holds it forth, which is the second. And

I come now to prove that these subordinations of synods have not the least warrant and designments of them in the word of God.

1. The New Testament is silent in it. And if it be said that all nations were not then converted when the apostles wrote, it is answered, that God, in the Old Testament, took care aforehand to set the order when they had no cities, nor were settled in the land. And, accordingly, if the apostles had not lived to see that which might occasion such an institution or precept, yet they would some way have left order for time to come.

2. But, secondly, though the apostles lived to see many famous particular churches erected in a province as well as in cities, in a nation, as in Judea, in Asia, in Crete, there were many cities and churches in each; and although all the people in those countries were not Christians nor members of churches, yet there was matter for the moulding and casting them into these subordinations, as well as now in France, where not the third part are protestants; or in the low countries, where not the tenth part of the inhabitants are members of their churches. It had been as necessary to have appointed them. They set up and appointed all needful remedies for ordering the churches after them when they should be gone. And it is more strange, that in the case of the spreading of errors they should not write to churches as gathered into synods, and as having the standing power to prevent and suppress them (if such ordinary standing assemblies, armed with coercive power, had been then in that existence as now), that upon no occasion this should be done, when yet they had occasions.

Take the seven churches in Asia, Ephesus, Thyatira, Smyrna, &c., with the rest of the churches there, in a province, called therefore proconsular Asia, and though therein we find many great disorders, and some in doctrine (the more proper work of these standing synods), yet we see that Christ writes only to each of these churches apart, and reproves each for the disorder in each. Whereas, had they been one church, in such a standing association for government, and had had ordinary provincial and national assemblies extant, as now, the reproofs would have been especially directed thereunto. As if errors and disorders were in the classical churches (as those all are pretended to be) of Scotland, the chief rebuke would now more justly fall upon the national and provincial assemblies, as their constitution is.

3. Yea, thirdly, the Holy Ghost would have at least vouchsafed to these or some other churches that were in like manner in a nation or province, as Galatia, &c., in respect of such a combination, the name of a church, who must have had, according to the principles of this government, so much of the power of a church. But nowhere are the churches in a province called a church, but churches, in the plural. And if the lesser churches, then these; yea, rather these, having most of the power, should therefore rather have had most of the name. Yea, and by how much the church power thereof should have been most independent (as a nation is), and so come most eminently within that rule, *Tell the church* (from which words these pretend their power, and yet cannot shew so much title thereto as to have the name church given them), let a rational account be given of this.

CHAPTER V.

The second argument against subordination of synods, that it would introduce a foreign ecclesiastical power over every state and kingdom.—The third argument, that there is no constant standing rule by which such a subordination should be ordered and managed.

Arg. 2. If there be such a subordination of synods in the church of Christ, then there is no independency but in an ecumenical council, which, first, would bring in a foreign ecclesiastical power over each state and kingdom; and secondly, which therefore of all other should have its designation and existence in the word, and is more needful than all the other two sorts of synods mentioned; for if any should be extant, then that which is *remedium efficacissimum*. It is said there is wanting *remedium efficax*, if these subordinations be not; but according to these principles, there is wanting that which is the most efficacious remedy, if a general council be not extant. For if there be not a resting in a classical presbytery, but provincial also must be, and appealed to; neither are they reckoned efficacious enough, but there must be national also, upon this supposition, that the greater assembly hath more of the promise and assistance of Christ than the lesser; then, of all other, a general council must be supposed, in a transcendent manner above all the rest, to have the promise of assistance made to it, and so to be the most eminently efficacious (if not the only) remedy on earth; yea, and only to be rested in, being that which only is the ultimate. Some of the papists, they give this to such a general council, that it cannot err; but according to these principles of presbyterial divines, though it might err, yet it is supposable to be transcendently more irrefragable than all the other under it, and God more with it than with all the rest. And therefore God in his word would have given especial order for this above all other; and the same God that suits his providences to his institutions would not have failed in what is the most sovereign remedy of all other, that it might have been existent in all ages; as we see his promise was to the Jews, to keep their land when the males thrice a-year went up to the general assembly at Jerusalem. But for three hundred years the churches wanted them, and could not enjoy them, and they are adjudged therefore not necessary to the government of the church, which yet, according to these principles, must have been the most necessary of all the rest. Yea, and further else, thirdly, there must be an injurious independency set up in a national synod; for when a man hath appealed from one court to another, and comes to this national, that is the ultimate existent, and upon the sentence thereof comes next to be banished out of a nation, to have his estate forfeited, to the ruin of himself and posterity, then it is he most of all needs the relief of an higher remedy, more efficacious than all those he hath gone through (if such an one may be); yet then he is left remediless, and (according to those principles) left more unsatisfied than ever; because, thinks he, there is by God's appointment a court that hath more of God and of Christ in it than all these, to judge of the truth and right, and lo it is not, nor can ever be expected.

Let it be withal considered, that when God appointed a subordination of standing courts, he withal designed out which should be the supreme, and made it the ultimate; and the supremacy and independency of it, in a set and standing way, was his institution as much as the appointment of the court itself, so that he was to be put to death that obeyed not the sentence

of it, and all appeals were thereby cut off. Therefore if a national church doth take upon it to be an independent church, upon the sentence thereof, to have the extremest punishment executed (but that of death) that in a nation men are capable of, it had need, for the quieting of all men's spirits, that must submit to it, not only shew a warrant from God, to be an ecclesiastical judicatory, but also to be the supreme court, as the Sanhedrim was, that appeals should be made unto.

Arg. 3. To that end, thirdly, let it be examined what set rules there is, or may be supposed to be, of these subordinations, and their bounds, and the ultimate independency in a national church, which should be fetched from some standing considerations which the word warrants: God never having constituted a church, but he gave the bounds thereof. All variation of church power is from God. The alteration of the government of his people, the Jews, from a family government (which had been under the law of nature) to national in Moses his time, was by express appointment; and as himself made and constituted it a national church, so there was an ecclesiastical government framed by himself suited thereunto. And in the New Testament there is a reed to measure the temple, Rev. xi. 1, a rule to set out the limits of church power, as well as under the Old. And therefore the argument is framed thus:

That church power which cannot shew a set and constant divine rule for its variation and subordination, and ultimate independency, is not of God, and so may not be. But this variation of church power into these subordinations cannot shew any such steady constant rule for these things. Therefore, &c.

The *major* is evident from what hath been said. The *minor* is made good by a removal of all particulars that may be supposed to be the square of framing these subordinations, &c.

1. Not that rule that the greater number or company of churches should rule and govern the less, and that the whole should rule the part, is a sufficient square by which to frame these subordinations.

For then, 1, there would be as many several subordinations as there can be supposed variations of greater numbers, and that will arise to more than these three only. Every new greater company would constitute a new synod. 2. Where is the promise of God, that he will be more with the greatest part of them that profess Christianity, rather than with a few, so far as to constitute a new power and government? Yea, 3, the greater number of churches professing religion are more corrupted, the pure churches are fewer. It had been ill for Philadelphia, and the angel and elders thereof, if those seven churches in Asia had been cast into such a subordinate association for government, to be exercised by the angels and elders of all the other six churches, with the rest in Asia. And the like may be said of the purer reformed churches in Germany; if the greater number of those that yet were true churches should have ruled the lesser, then (Lutherans and Calvinists being bound to this government) the Lutherans (being also true churches, and yet the more in number) would by virtue of this law have soon corrupted the purer. And what reason can be pretended (according to this rule and the principles of this government) to leave any true churches out of an association? 4. Suppose there should be as many elders and churches more purely reformed in one province or shire as in the rest of a whole nation besides (as instance might be given in some of the reformed churches that there are), why should not God be thought to be as much with them as with the national assembly? And if all are to give themselves up to this law, how will the greater, which is the worse, either corrupt the purer, or expel

them? 5. If *qua* greater, then the decrees of greater (viz., general councils) in former ages should bind us more than national or provincial now, for they should have had more of church in them (by this rule), and so more of Christ; and then take all general councils that set up popes and bishops, and all other superstitions, if it be said we chose them not, yet still that is not the ground makes their decrees less divine, or obliging to us, but it lies in the authority of God's ordinance, that they were the greater and more general councils. And, however, still if this be the rule, that the greater number of churches rule the less, then take the measure of this greatness and number of churches from time, stretching the line over all ages past, as well as from the greater number of churches in such or such a place or nation in the present times, and so look what general councils for most ages of the world did establish, should (by virtue of this law) oblige the present times, and have more force upon us, than the universal church in this present age, much more than of any national assembly, if either be simply considered under a mere ecclesiastical obligation, that is, *qua* greater, and more of church. Time varies not the case so, but that all their acts, having been acts of the church universal in all ages, should comparatively stand more in force; but, however, the acts of any of the last general councils will stand in force until a general council of like extent repeal those acts, as the statutes of parliament of our ancestors do, if not repealed by like and equal authority.

2. It is not the notion, or the consideration of their being churches in such or such a nation or province, that can be the rule of making this obligation, or setting of these bounds. It must be considered that the question is of a mere ecclesiastic obligation, by virtue of church principles, such as should have been a just rule and measure to the primitive churches, ere princes turned Christian, to have reared up the like subordinations. Now then the limits from hence must either rise, from being first one church in a kingdom, under the same civil government; or, secondly, one church in a nation, that is, either from a national respect or political.

(1.) First, in general, from neither; for that instance in Acts xv., of the council there, its rise, or the bounds of its authority, was founded upon neither; for if either national or political respects should have obliged them, they should have sent to Syria or Cilicia, and not Jerusalem, who were both under a differing government civil, and of another nation. But,

(2.) Secondly, more particularly.

[1.] Not *qua* church in one kingdom, for that is *per accidens* to a church, that it grows up to a kingdom, or that the whole nation is converted to Christianity, and therefore a set rule for all times cannot be fetched from thence. This could not be the certain measure of the independency of church power in the apostles' times. [2.] This makes the bounds of ecclesiastical independency and jurisdiction uncertain, varying as the bounds of kingdoms do vary. When the Roman empire had all kingdoms under it, all the churches must then have been obliged to have had then general standing councils, suited to the extent of the empire, to have been the next unto the provincial, for their supreme judicatory, such as the national are now to the provincial, or else before the empire turned Christian, there was this rule, even as many independencies as churches. And then again, when this empire was broken into ten kingdoms, yea, and many more, there arose, instead of the former, many new independent boundaries of church power (of which only the question is, and not of that power which a church doth come to have, and simply and alone holds of the magistrate, which will be merely civil), and then, as kingdoms vary by conquest, the like alteration the bounds of church power must receive. Among the Jews it did not, which when the church was broken

into two kingdoms, by God's appointment, yet the church state, by God's institution, varied not, but was still one church. Lastly, if this independency ariseth from the magistrate, then there is no need of such subordinations, which is proved by experience in reformed churches abroad, who are well enough governed, without these subordinations. Geneva hath no appeals, but is governed by one classical church; and why may not all other churches, as well without them, if the magistrate oversees them, and keep each to their duties? The churches in the low countries want national synods, and yet are peaceably governed; yea, some for a long time have been without provincial, and say, if they can, they will never have more; and yet are peaceably and quietly governed. It is as the civil magistrate will terminate the independency, and himself overlook it.

2. Secondly, If these bounds be fetched from national respects, then in Germany, the Calvinists must be subject to the greater number of Lutherans; and, in this kingdom, all ministers must make up this association, and the greater number will be the worse, and oppose the good. If because the Calvinists, that profess a further reformation, are disobliged from associating with the Lutherans, then those in any nation that profess a further reformation than others, are free by the same law. Surely uniformity of principles is a more intimate bond of such association than any such outward extrinsecal respects. 2. If *qua* nation, then Wales must be independent. 3. If *qua* nation, then, 1, if nation be taken for a people of the same tongue and kindred, all the Christian Jews in the primitive times, when scattered into any nations, were bound to have made one church distinct from all the churches they cohabited with; 2, if for a people dwelling in the same national bounds, then the same Jews, being dispersed into several countries and nations, must have made one church with the several nations where they lived; whereas Peter in his epistle, and James in his, and Paul to the Hebrews, wrote unto the Jews apart, as churches in all nations.

CHAPTER VI.

The fourth argument against subordination of synods, that it requireth representation of spiritual power, arising from other representations.

Arg. 4. That government which necessarily requireth and produceth representations, arising out of other representations of spiritual power, having a derived power therefrom, there is no warrant for. But these subordinations of synods, provincial, national, ecumenical, for the government of the church, do so, &c.

The *major* shall be spoken to, after the *minor* proposition is both cleared and proved, which is done by putting two things together: 1, that if there be an authoritative subordination of all churches in the provinces to a national assembly, and so of many nations to an ecumenical, binding unto subjection; that then all in the provinces must be interested in that national, and all in the nation in that ecumenical; so as it may be said, that they are all involved and included, and so obliged, as it is in parliamentary power, wherein the shires are involved. 2. That this interest in this subordination cannot arise but either by immediate choice of those elders who shall represent them, by each church and congregation immediately (which is the case of our parliament men, chosen immediately by those they represent), or else, that the provincial elders sent by the congregations shall choose out of themselves some few that shall represent the provinces; and so likewise the

national assemblies shall choose out some few that shall represent the whole nation in a general council. Now, the first of these is not, nor can be: the congregations meet not for any such immediate choice, but the elders of them all choose out of themselves. So as the obligation of all the churches to be subject to a national assembly (arising out of those other subordinations), is not because they are a greater number of elders or divines; for in a provincial synod there may be assembled as many as in the national; but it ariseth from hence, that some out of all do represent the rest; and otherwise, when a national assembly sits in a great city, all other neighbour ministers must come and vote with them, and outvote them who are the representers of the whole.

Now such a representation, having a derived spiritual power from other representations, is not in matters spiritual warrantable. Besides all arguments against delegated power in matters spiritual, all ministers being immediately *Christi vicarii*, and that all such representations grow weaker, as reflections use to do; elders represent the churches in classical and provincial assemblies, as being immediately chosen by them; but the elders in national assemblies are the representations of elders in provinces, and so are a shadow of that first shadow, whereas yet they have the most of power, even all that can be supposed to belong to the whole substance. Besides such considerations, it is argued thus:

1. If that these few out of nations should bind all those nations in matters spiritual, and a few out of provinces, the nation, they must be supposed to have the promise, and an assistance answerable. But where is either the promise, or can gifts in a few be supposed to produce such an obligation? It is true, 'where two or three are gathered together,' his promise is to be in the midst of them, and so suppose with more when more are met; but that his promise should be to be with a few out of a nation, as with the whole nation, and those not chosen immediately by the nation, but the representers of them, cannot be expected. It is granted, that each so met hath the gifts and assistance of an elder; and so the whole, as of so many elders met (as we in this assembly are to be looked upon, and the judgment thereof accordingly reverenced); but that as they are elders representative of hundreds of other elders, who themselves are representers of churches, that any such addition should arise to them, by virtue of this duplicated representation, over and above what is in their single gifts and offices, let either a warrant be produced or a promise. Two things are allowed them, but a third denied them: 1, it is granted, they may have assistance to judge as elders, which is their office; 2, assistance to judge according to their personal abilities, being thus called to give their advice; but, 3, such a superadded assistance as holds proportion to that spiritual bulk and body which they represent (for suppose that always it falls out, that the best and choicest of a nation are chosen, yet still not to hold proportion to a whole nation), there must be a more than ordinary promise for it, and therefore had need be express and evident. That it is otherwise in commonwealths, is because the representations, and also the power conveyed, being human creations, the persons represented can set up a power which shall represent them; but this power we speak of is supernatural, and must be from God and his institution. The Sanhedrim of Jerusalem had a special assistance above all courts else; and therefore God appointed causes to be brought to it, which special assistance is intimated twice in the institution of it, Deut. xvii., by this, that they 'should go up to the place which God should choose,' ver. 8: and 'do according to the sentence which they of that place (which the Lord shall choose) shall shew thee.' An emphasis is put upon the blessing, which

by God's choice and election did accompany that place which God had chosen to put his name, and promised to be in an eminent manner present in, and to accept their sacrifices there offered (which was a representative worship of that nation), and not elsewhere. Now, as that was the representative worship of the nation, so these governors were the representative governors of the nation, and both sanctified in that place, as the gift was by the altar, as that which God had chosen. If the like institution were found, with the intimation of such a blessing from a peculiar choice of God's, of national assemblies, all ought to subject to them in matters spiritual.

2. If there be such representations as these, in one or few persons of many churches, they have each for that time, whilst in such an assembly, archiepiscopal and episcopal power; and their case is parallel (parallel then for that time and occasion, and as met in a synod) with that of so many bishops, when met in a council, whose episcopal power, as then and therein met, lies in this, that they are so many churches representative; especially this would fall out if these synods should still consist of the same men, or if some few should be always chosen to them. And why may there not be standing persons, that are more skilful in such affairs through exercise, usually chosen, as well as standing assemblies themselves? And then as touching matters of jurisdiction in such an assembly, they are for the present the same with so many bishops met in a convocation.

3. If these representations, having the power of all the churches in the nation, were warrantable, they must be a church. Besides that they are nowhere so called (we leave the usurpation of that name to the popish clergy), and if so, then a body to Christ; for so every church is; and where is Christ said to have a representative body of his body? They are a church, that is, a company of elders personally gathered; but a representative church they are not, cannot be; and yet must be, or they have not the power of all the churches in a nation in them, nor otherwise do their acts oblige them to subjection.

CHAPTER VII.

Reasons against the allegation brought, of Acts xv., *for the subordination of synods, provincial, national, ecumenical.—And reasons against the argument drawn from the analogy of* Mat. xviii.

Besides what hath been said against this example, alleged to prove presbyterial acts of government, by the elders of the church of Jerusalem, in the reasons formerly presented; proving, 1, that that one example cannot serve to prove both the presbyterial government and synodical, but that if the assembly will lean to the one, the other must be quitted; 2, that the assembly was not a formal synod, but only a reference by the particular church of Antioch, of their differences among themselves, unto this particular church of Jerusalem, and no other; it is moreover added, that the example of it is here further extended, to prove all sorts of synods and subordinations thereof, both provincial, national, and ecumenical, and so it must suit all these so great varieties, when it was not made fit for any one of them.

But if it had been a synod, yet, 1, neither provincial nor national, but the contrary; for Antioch consults not with the churches of her own nation, but seeks to Jerusalem, a church of Judea, of another nation and another province. 2. Neither is it the instance of a standing synod (which the word subordination doth necessarily infer them to be standing courts, or else the

links of those chains will not hang together), but elective; for they sent, out of election and choice to them, but about this one question at this time, without any obligation to refer all other matters to them in an ordinary way. 3. Nor is it the multiplication of synods, but only of one, in whose judgment those of Antioch rested. 4. Much less is it the instance of rearing up of a subordination and contignation of synods, superior and inferior, which is a further thing; for though, when offences are not healed, and one reference to other churches is not sufficient to cure them, there should be a seeking to others, yet the example obligeth the churches that are in difference, not to take and choose the churches of that province, either as of that province, or as the greater number to whom both those among whom the controversy is, and those to whom it was afore referred, must be subordinarily subject. Much less doth it hold forth, that the churches of that province may judicially challenge a right of authority to decide it, and oblige them, *sub pœna*, to their determination, and then the churches of that whole nation challenge the like over all. But still it runs in this way only, that those who shall be judged meetest and ablest, and faithfullest, to determine and compose it, by those who are to refer it.

The argument is usually drawn from like reason, and let there be found like reason, and it is granted; and though itself is not the pattern of a formal synod, yet it holds forth this rule of equity, that when offences arise among churches, references ought to be made, from out of themselves, to churches abroad, to heal them. But the question is, To what churches these references are to be made? And let the like reason, held forth in the example, be kept unto, and decide it. Say we still to those churches, the churches offended or divided shall choose, as fittest and ablest to determine it. This is clear in the example: Antioch was not bound to refer it to the church of Jerusalem, as greater, or as a next neighbour, or of the same province, but as best able to judge of the differences. And this way agrees with the law of nature and of arbitration, so usual amongst men, which God hath there set up as an ordinance and pattern of proceeding in such cases. But this subordination of synods intended holds so differing a course from this, as, 1, instead of elective synods and occasional, it sets up standing, and so set to be the judge of the churches under them for ever; 2, not in one case (as Antioch to Jerusalem), but in all cases whatever shall fall out; 3, not in a way of multiplication or diversification, as need shall be, but of subordination and settled superiority; and the grounds of this to be, because the greatest must rule the less, and that they are neighbour churches, in the same province or nation. And this the like reason, in Acts xv., is so far from countenancing, that in all things it is unlike, and so there is a differing constitution, and rise of those synods thus subordinate, from what the reason drawn from Acts xv. will warrant; and therefore doth make a differing formal reason in the government; and human prudence added will not rectify it, when the reason of the institution is so much varied from. For instance, if the fundamental law for remedy of wrongs, and deciding controversies, in any kingdom, were by arbitration elective, to take them their judges whom the parties in difference judge aptest every way for the present controversy, and that the precedents and ruled cases hold forth no more; and if that the government of another kingdom were, that the greater should rule and determine the causes of the less, and according to the proportion thereof, to have subordinate standing courts erected, to which (by appeal from the one to the other) all causes should be brought; whether were not these two such differing frames of government, so as that he that would mould the first to the second might not be challenged to set up a new government, differing from

the fundamental law of that kingdom? and whether the one is not at liberty to withstand the second, if it were vouchsafed to any kingdom (and that is the case here)? is humbly submitted. And the bounds of such assemblies elective needed no set or standing rule, because they rise from occasional electiveness, in case of controversy and offence, and the extent thereof. And so the condition and nature of the things themselves do prescribe their own limits, and hold forth their own rise, like as the bounds of particular congregations, to be of such as live so as conveniently to meet in one place, ariseth from the nature of the thing itself, and the necessary requisites thereunto.

I shall now consider the argument drawn from the analogy of Mat. xviii.

1. The strength of the argument runs, that because there should be this remedy, that therefore there is such a remedy.

2. It is granted there is a remedy, which is a going forth to other churches, which Acts xv. holds forth; but that excommunication (which is the remedy held forth in Mat. xviii.) of the offending church or churches, should be the remedy, is not there held forth, as hath been shewn. There is a remedy of co-ordination, such as between two nations, and as between *pares* (as churches are) proceeding in a way suitable to their condition, but not this of subordination, that the greater number of churches should become standing courts, and have power to excommunicate the lesser; but that all churches have a power to declare the offence, and withdraw communion from those churches. And, in reason, how is it possible for a national church to excommunicate all the churches of a province? And how ineffectual would that be? Or for a general council to excommunicate a nation? And if they cannot use this remedy, to what end is this subordination of synods, having this authority, pleaded for?

And whereas it is said, that there must be the same remedy that is in a congregation for an offending brother, or else where the disease is strongest the remedy is weakest, it is answered,

1. That where the disease is strongest, there this, which is called the strongest remedy, cannot be applied, or with an apparent efficaciousness; for when the churches in a province err, or a national, here the disease is strongest, and yet it would be in vain to interdict them communion among themselves or deliver them unto Satan. Yea, when it comes to the highest, and where the disease is greatest and strongest, there is not only no remedy, but the highest and greatest power to do hurt upon all under them, as when the generality of the clergy were Arians; and if they err, the error is worse than of a pope's erring or of a bishop's. He is but one, and may be deposed; and in the greater bodies of the clergy the greater part are and have been still the worser and more corrupt, as is apparent in this kingdom at present, in which (by virtue of the presbyterial principles) all ministers must be taken in; and if you will put them out, where will others be had in their room? Convert men we cannot; and if not converted, ministers of all others are the worst and greatest opposites to religion; and if a national assembly be chosen by these, the greater number are like to be of the worst, and such as may alter all that you now have done. And if it be said that this would hold against great politic bodies as well, who may undo the commonwealth, the answer is, that the common and equal interest of all, and the common principles of preserving the rights and liberties of a state, and seeking the common good, is natural to the generality of men; but the truth of the gospel and purity of religion, and the power thereof, is contrary to the principles of all natural men, and in all ages the most of the clergy have been aptest to corrupt the one and oppose the other. And in those ages when

such councils began to be standing, and in most credit, after the first three hundred years, then was it that the mystery of popery did work most powerfully, and those superstitious and corrupt opinions grew up which made way for the man of sin, and that body of popish doctrine that hath overspread the world. And if there should be no danger of corrupting the truth, yet the churches (though reformed) coming all out of popery, and not being fully enlightened in all things, and the first notion of anything further in matters of theology usually falling into the hearts and spirits but of a few, we shall have no further truth taught, but suppressed, till a whole nation is enlightened in it.

2. The efficacy of all remedies doth depend first upon Christ's blessing on them, which depends upon his institution of them. and *par ratio*, or, like reason, will never set up an ordinance, unless Christ hath himself appointed it; and in the example, Acts xv., there is not this way of proceeding held forth. Secondly, it lies in suitableness to the condition of those that are to be dealt with. Now, when many churches deal with an erring church, the churches in a province with many erring churches, or of a nation with a province, they must be in reason dealt with, suitably to the condition of churches, and of a multitude, and surely a brotherly way of admonition and withdrawing communion is more suitable unto such; as in the civil government, if a province rebelleth, or a great multitude of subjects, should the state presently hang up all in that province? although unto particular persons rebelling this is efficacious to suppress rebellion. Thirdly, Christ hath suited his remedies unto all times and unto all conditions, and how national and provincial assemblies could be during the first three hundred years, when yet the churches were all governed, is submitted.

3. And lastly, If the analogy of this 18th of Matthew be argued, then first let the analogy be kept, and then when a church hath offended other churches, they are not to bring them to a set court of judicatory at first; for Christ's rule is otherwise in dealing with an offending brother, electively to take two or three churches and admonish them, which is suited to that way fore-mentioned, Acts xv. But as for the proceedings against a brother in a congregation, there is not a set appointed number of two or three standing persons to be the admonishers of all, ere it comes to the church, nor have they power to excommunicate; and thus by this proportion, instead of these set and standing provincial assemblies to whom causes are next brought, and these armed with power of excommunication, there should only be two or three or more neighbour churches to admonish the offending church, and not a stated court to bring it unto. Secondly, let it be shewn where a standing synod of elders is called *the church*, and how then can the analogy hold when it holds not in this, the main, 'Tell the church'? Lastly, the like reason holds not, unless these particular congregations have the power of excommunication; for otherwise, if these greater assemblies' power be argued from the analogy of the lesser, and the same remedy, excommunication, and the particular congregations have not that allowed them, then, by the principles of this analogy, it is nowhere to be found; but as the congregational churches have a power only to admonish and to suspend the sacraments, that so the greater assemblies should have no more also. And though the church universal is called a church, and one body to Christ, yet as materially considered, and not as a politic body in respect to government, which was never yet asserted by this assembly.*

* The assembly of divines at Westminster.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the intercourse or communion which particular churches are to hold one with another.—That there is a twofold communion of saints, the one arising from the relation which they all bear to one another as members of Christ's mystical body; the other, which proceeds from their being formed into particular churches by Christ's institution.—That the duties of catholic communion, which one believer owes to another, by virtue of their all being members of the same mystical body of Christ, those duties one or many churches may and ought to perform to another church.

Having proved that neither the church universal, nor a church as national, or in a kingdom, nor a church classical of many congregations associated, are the subjects and seats of political power for juridical censures, as excommunication, &c., but a congregational church only, there yet remaineth to be considered what intercourse, communion, and correspondency we assert to be between each church and their elders, by virtue of any or all those considerations and respects. We acknowledge that by virtue of the consideration of the church universal, whereof each congregation is a part, and by virtue of churches being in a nation of the same language, under the same civil government, or living in the same neighbourhood, and being of the same judgment, there is to be a great and near communion to be entertained between all such churches, and according to such respects. This communion is to be observed with some more nearly and strictly; and such is the nature of this communion, as it will oblige all churches one to another in a multitude of mutual duties, which, if observed, may help to preserve churches from running into confusion, may rectify miscarriages, preserve them from errors, and may salve all those inconveniences which use to be objected against this assertion, of placing only political power in congregational bodies.

We lay this for a general rule, that there is a twofold church and church-relation which the New Testament holds forth; and answerably, a twofold way of communion. There is, first, a church mystical; and secondly, there is a church political, or a politic body, which is the seat of government by institution. We said at first, that communion of saints and churches do both run along together in a parallel proportion, communion of saints being the foundation of uniting all into that body of the church; and as we said there is a twofold communion of saints, one fixed, for communion in public ordinances, the other occasional, so there is a double constitution of church.

1. There is first a church mystical, and a communion answerable, whether we take it for the invisible company of the elect, or for the visible company of the professors of Christianity, that do walk as saints throughout the world. The invisible church is acknowledged by all sorts to be a mystical body; but it is not only called a mystical body, as it is opposed to the church visible, but as it is opposed to a church by institution, that is, a politic body. The visible catholic church is not a body by institution, as in heaven it shall not be. We acknowledge that the visible saints in a kingdom, or in a city, may be called the church, as bearing the respect, or consideration, or notion of the mystical universal church; as every part of water bears the name of the whole, so as it is not only the church universal that hath the consideration of a mystical body put upon it, but the same consideration may be put upon any company of saints, whether smaller or greater, in a kingdom, or in a city, or in a province. And so we believe, that oftentimes in the New

Testament, the saints in such a place are spoken of and called the church; they are called so, *sub consideratione mystica*, under that mystical consideration, and not as considered as a politic body; as when it is said that Saul persecuted the church, 1 Cor. xv. 9, it was not the church universal that he persecuted, it was not a church under a political consideration, but it was the saints in every place where he came. So when it is said that prayers were made by the church for Peter, Acts xii. 5, it is not spoken of them as a church congregated for worship, or a church political, but the meaning is, that the saints generally in Jerusalem, and about in Judea, prayed for him, the saints being there called a church under that mystical consideration that the church universal is called.

Now answerably unto these two several considerations and notions of church, whether applied to the church universal or to any parcel of saints, there is a twofold communion, and the duties are twofold which the saints owe one to another: the one in respect of mystical and general relation, as occasionally they meet or are cast together; and the other is as they are formed up into several bodies by Christ's institution. This may be exemplified by the like among mankind. Take all mankind as they are made of one blood, under the general notion and consideration of being men; by virtue hereof there is a communion that one man may have with another, and there are duties that thence do arise; and as it is the law of nature, singly and apart considered, which obligeth them, as they are men, so answerably there is a communion, and there is a duty which every man oweth to every man as a man, and a duty which one man oweth to many men, considered as many, or to a greater number of mankind; and therefore we say, there is the law of nature, which holds all the world over, and laws of nature that are fundamental to men as men. And if you cast men into several nations, there is the law of nations, common to all nations as they are nations, which binds them to duties one toward another. But there is another communion that mankind hath as they are formed up, and when they are formed up, into several commonwealths, which, though it be a mutual communion of those commonwealths one with another, yet it ariseth not to government and authority over one another, but is but suitable and answerable to that communion which men have one with another as men. Thus, in the matter of communion of saints as saints, there is a communion which is carried through all saints, as it were by the law of nature, and that is carried between these saints as formed up into several bodies or churches. The same kind of communion holdeth between church and church, elders and elders, that would hold between mankind as formed into several commonwealths; and there are duties which they are obliged unto mutually, for mutual help, for mutual strength, &c. There are associations and leagues made to several purposes; and there are defiances and renunciations, when the laws of nations and nature common to kingdoms are broken. Amongst the saints, there is a communion betwixt the saints cast into the same family, and there are duties answerable and suitable; and then there is a communion which the saints have, consisting of many families united into one church, and there are duties agreeable. And there is a communion and duties which are to pass between these saints, as they are members of a nation, and as they are churches in the same nation, and upon many such respects, yea, and also as they are parts of the church universal. Only in this, here lies the difference between us and our brethren, that they would make the communion which is between all the saints and all the churches in the world to be as truly political, the lesser being subject to the greater, in the church universal, or in a nation, as it is in a particular congregation, as we would; or

as it is in a church classical, according to their opinion, or as it is in a particular congregation, as we assert it.

Now that there is such a differing kind of communion, the one by way of authority and jurisdiction, and the other according to the common law of nature (as we may so express it), is evident by the principles of either side. For the presbyterian divines, who hold national churches, in a political consideration (when churches come up to that number as to make a nation, and so several nations, several national churches), yet hold that there is a communion to be held between these, and an obligation to a multitude of duties ;* yea, and an uniformity that is to be between these, when yet they will not say, that the one hath authority or power of jurisdiction over the other. As for instance, if you take the national church of Scotland and the national church of England, or if you suppose that there were but two churches in the world, there would be a great deal of communion held between the one and the other, and ought to be, when yet the one could not assume a power over the other, but each retains a power of jurisdiction entire within themselves. This different kind of communion appears likewise by this, that there are duties which one saint oweth to another upon mere moral grounds, as that a man should pray with, and pray for a saint, and build him up in his holy faith, and admonish him, and not let sin lie upon him, or withdraw from him, if he do not repent, &c. So that if there were but two saints in the world, which could not make a politic church, they would owe all these duties one to another ; but not upon a ground of institution, as a duty of the second commandment, but as of a duty of the second table, which bindeth us to love our neighbour as ourselves. And so if there were no congregations or churches in the world, the saints would upon such a consideration owe to one another abundance of duties. Yea, indeed, there is almost no duty that is practised in a congregation, by way of institution, but a duty of a like kind upon another ground is required occasionally of saints one to another. Men that have preaching gifts, might exercise them occasionally to the edification of others in a natural way, where there was not a church nor officers of a church ; and yet God hath took up preaching into an office, made a calling on purpose for it by way of institution. So, to avoid any man that walk inordinately, to instruct him, to reprove him, are duties which one saint oweth to another, and one saint to many saints, and many saints to any saint ; which kind of discipline the saints did practise one toward another, in the bishops' times, and had a warrant so to do in the word of God ; but all this did run, as it were, by the law of nature in a moral way, by virtue of the second table and the duties of it. But as Jesus Christ hath by institution formed up his saints into several churches (so that such bodies are by institution), he hath stamped all such duties as are amongst Christians by this general law of nature, with an institution over and above that former mere natural or moral consideration. He hath here appointed one brother to admonish another, in order to bring him up to that church he belongs unto, to a censure ; and he hath ordained public persons that should be by way of office admonishers in public, and that should admonish with authority, and with such an authority put upon that admonition, as thus performed, as is not to be found in all the saints in the world, if they should admonish a man. There is not only a withdrawing (which one saint may do from another, though there was no way of church-fellowship), but there is superadded an institution of casting out ; and not only so, but a delivering unto Satan, which all these saints in the world cannot do; for what power had they, unless it be from a promise annexed to an institution,

* See the Scotch Reasons for Uniformity.

to deliver a man to the devil, for him to seize upon a man's conscience when he is thrown out.

Hence, therefore, the saints formed up into congregations, with their elders, being to us the only ecclesiastical body by institution, an instituted authority and power of jurisdiction is found only answerably in them, and all other relations of saints and churches one to another fall only under a mystical consideration, and therefore their communion and their power is answerable. The one runneth in a way of special institution; the other *modo mystico*, in a way of mystical communion. To the one, the ordinance of excommunication is therefore only proper and peculiar; to the other, a withdrawing or a non-communion appertains.

1. Hence, therefore, in the first place, we do grant and acknowledge, that many of the same duties and actions, which performed in a particular church do rise up to jurisdiction, are and may be performed by a greater number of churches to another church; but only *modo mystico*, in a way of mystical communion, because the relation is such, and yet the duties may be the same, and the actions the same. A greater number of churches may admonish another church, they may cast out another church from their communion and association, but all this will not arise to a juridical power of excommunication. They may declare men to be perverters of the faith, to be heretics, so as to fulfil the apostle's rule, not to eat with them, or bid them God speed, 2 John 10, 11, and yet in all this it doth not arise to assuming jurisdiction.

2. We acknowledge, in the second place, that in such actions of many churches toward one church, there is an impress of authority, taking it in a larger sense, for that which hath a persuasiveness and an inducement in it; but it will not arise to an authority juridical, such as Jesus Christ hath placed in them, as they are a political body. But for that power which is placed by Christ, by virtue of an institution, there is a superadded authority of Jesus Christ beyond the force of moral or rational inducements, and the conscience is to be subject to the power and authority therein, as unto the power of Christ, for his will and institution's sake. If we take the elders of one congregation, besides all the considerations that are common to them with all other elders and saints in the world, there is an authority stamped by Christ upon them, by virtue of their relation and office, so as the members of that congregation are to be subject to them, not only upon moral grounds, but on account of that authority with which Christ hath invested them; and in the acts that they do (admonitions, casting men out, excommunication, and the like) there is an efficacy to be expected, which is in no other order of men in the world, if they would undertake the like. The difference of these two powers may appear by abstracting all rational or moral inducements. 1. This authority of the elders is more than authority by way of reason, or by one's alleging an express rule out of the word, which a man's conscience may apprehend by faith from the mouth of him that doth direct him, or lay it before him. Another man's wife or servant may subject herself to the guidance of a reason, or of a scripture, that is brought by another man, who yet hath not authority added to it, such as her husband hath when he addeth a command thereunto besides. A child is said to lead one new converted, Isa. xi. 6; but in this case it is merely the authority of the word or reason alleged that the conscience subjects itself to, without any further respect to anything in the propounder. 2. The authority of jurisdiction, which is in a particular church, is more than the authority of reverence or respect to the grace or judgment of another, founded upon whatever considerations, besides the institutions of Christ. There are many considera-

tions that may breed reverence to another, as their grace and their holiness, and the power of their gifts; as Herod reverenced John Baptist, and feared him, because he was an holy man. Thus a man's wife may be induced to obey the command of one that is a minister, though not her minister, she knowing him to be a judicious man, and a man of much holiness; but yet still this doth not arise to a power given from Christ juridically, by way of institution, over and above such respects. It is not such a power as her own minister hath over her, and for which she is to respect and regard him; neither is it such as her own husband hath over her. The judgment of many ministers assembled hath an authority of reverence in it, because they are wise; yea, and because they are the ministers of Christ, by whose judgments Jesus Christ leadeth men into truth; and as they are ministers of Christ, they have a special blessing accompanying of them, and all such respects the consciences of men are to take in to move them to yield to what they declare and determine. Yet still this doth not arise to the consideration of juridical authority which they have from Christ, over those whom they would guide; but such a man's own elders have. 3. There are many considerations which may make a man to subject himself to what another saith, which yet doth not rise to juridical authority. A man, in the cases of scandal, and offending of a church or a brother, may forbear to do that which is in his liberty to do, but the brother offended hath not authority juridical over the other; for it is but an accidental consideration.

3. In the third place, we acknowledge that, by virtue of this mystical communion, the churches hold one with another in their mutual transactions one with another; they are to look on them as churches, and on the elders as instituted by Christ, and not only as holy; but yet still they are not to regard them as having an instituted authority given them by Christ over this or any other churches. Thus when Paul would put a weight upon his commendation of Titus, he put it upon this, that he was one whose praise was in all the churches, and that he was chosen by the churches to carry the alms. And therefore, of old, the letters that were wrote from one church to another were superscribed as from the churches (as in Clement's epistle, the style runs thus, 'The church of Rome to the church of Corinth'), and they do deal with them as one church of Christ dealeth with another, and as having the authority and spirit of a church with them, in their admonitions, in their reproofs, in their directions, or the like; but still it riseth not to jurisdiction. As if one kingdom or state doth deal with another state, they look on it as such, and accordingly respect it; and their mediations, or whatever other interpositions of theirs are directed to them, not only as a company of men, but as they are a state; and yet still it riseth not up to any jurisdiction that one state hath over another. And so also in the transactions of elders of other churches, unto any member of a church, or to the church itself, over which they are not elders, they yet are to be looked upon as elders, and accordingly respected in their admonitions and in their judgments; but still it riseth not to jurisdiction. If a nobleman comes from one kingdom to another, as the nobles of Scotland as commissioners into England, they are to be respected and regarded as nobles, according to their place and quality, by the law of nations, and the law of nature, and communion of one state with another; but still they are no way to be regarded as having jurisdiction, or exercising the office of nobles where they come, as the nobles of England do.

4. In the fourth place, we do grant that other churches may deal with any church (as occasion is) as in the name of Christ, and admonish them, reprove them, and the like; but they deal in Christ's name, in this sense,

that they entreat them by virtue of that name of Christ, which is called upon by them, and which, in a common way, all do profess, and which would be thus and thus dishonoured. But they deal not with them in the name of Christ in this sense, as if they had a juridical power from Christ to deliver them up to Satan, such as the church at Corinth had, when met together, over the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v.

5. In the fifth place, it may arise to an authority of commanding, and that in the name of Christ; and answerably it ariseth to be the duty of that church to be subject, and to obey them. In 1 Cor. xvi. 16, says the apostle, 'I beseech you, submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.' He speaks of ministers, those that labour in the gospel. It is the same word with that which is used of subjection to a man's own elders in Heb. xiii. 17; and yet it is not *subjectio legalis*, a subjection by law of authority (as Estius distinguisheth it), such as a man hath to his own bishop (saith he), but *moralis, qualem reverentes præstamus virtute excellentibus*, but a moral subjection, such as we yield in reverence to those who excel in virtue. So as all elders are to have in all churches the reverence of elders, and yet but such as a church, considered as such, hath and is to have from all other churches. It is reverenced as a church indeed, and as a sister church, but not as having that authority over another church which it hath over its own members; and such an authority all the churches in the world hath not over one church, as all the imperial cities of Germany have it not over one city. So as the question is now, whether there be not an obligation arising from the admonitions and judgments of many churches, and the elders of them, and also a duty commanded from Christ, upon all such considerations as have been mentioned? Yet still so far, and no farther, than such grounds will carry it, is this duty to be laid upon a church, and a subjection called for, as Jesus Christ himself lays it upon them. They are to be subject, not only because these churches do present to them, in the name of Christ, what is their sin, or what is their duty, but further, they are to take into their consideration their being churches, and churches instituted by Christ, with whom the blessing of Christ is to lead them into truth, and to regard the elders of churches as persons with whom he is in a more peculiar manner present. But yet still they are not bound in such a subjection to them as to their own elders, who are by institution set over them, and to whom they have a special relation, Acts xx. 28. If a pastor of another congregation should come, and is admitted to preach for his brother elder in any congregation, they are to hear him as an elder, but yet not to hear him with that special peculiar subjection, which, by virtue of Christ's institution, a congregation owes to their own pastor.

CHAPTER IX.

The several duties of communion which one church owes to another enumerated. —That this communion doth not include in it, that one church may exercise any act of jurisdiction over another.

Hence then all sort of duties that the law of love and brotherly union can any way exact or extend to, and that are founded thereupon in the word of God, of saints to saints, and church to church, we approve of, and judge ought to be held by any church, to all churches in the world, which we take to be the true meaning of that scripture in Eph. iv. 16, that the whole body of the church being joined together, every part is to edify every part, and the

whole, upon all occasions and in all ways possible; but it is in ways of brotherly love, it is not with a spiritual rod of coercive censure and jurisdiction. The bonds and ties of law are acknowlegded, not rods and whips of coercive censure and jurisdiction, *sub pœna traditionis Satanæ*, under the penalty of delivering to Satan.

1. Thus, first, they are to afford part of their spiritual good things, as occasion is, to all or any church; so by virtue of that communion, the church of Philippi was bound to cause to be read, as much as in them lay, that epistle which was writ to them, in the church of Laodicea also, which was one of the Asian churches; yet that their causing that epistle to be received by the Laodiceans was not by any jurisdiction, but by communion of good things.

2. There may be communion in whatever is matter of mere privilege in any church, but not in jurisdiction. Yea, there may be associations and leagues of friendship, as between two states, when yet not subjection; thus between kingdoms a mutual intercourse of trade. As he that was free of Rome was free all the world over, and he might come and trade in any other kingdom, so any that are members of such churches as profess, both for receiving in of members and casting out of members, to go according to the rule of the word, may occasionally receive the sacrament in any church truly constituted, and bring their children to be baptized, and may partake of all the ordinances; for this is only to partake of the common privileges; but they are not to exercise any act of power or punishment, when they come to those other churches: as if a minister were to be chosen, or a member to be thrown out or suspended from the sacrament, they are not to take upon them to have a voice in it. Between two families there may be communion of good things, without exercising of acts of power and authority, whenas one family doth not take upon them to exercise authority in the other family, as not to chastise the children, to dispose of parties in marriage, nor is there any communion in conjugal acts. So in commonwealths there is a communion of things communicable, as to afford men, money, and assistance, to give subsistence to any one that will live in a stranger kingdom; but they are not admitted to choice of magistrates, to judge of causes, to be of a jury, in any nation but their own.

3. Also, thirdly, there is that brotherly communion between churches, that whom one church denies communion with, having cast him out by a just censure, all the rest of the churches do reject him also; which was an usual practice in the primitive times, as often Cyprian writes to other churches, saying, *abstinuimus*, we have abstained from such or such a man, that they might have warning not to admit communion with him. And this seems to be one great end of synods, as appears from the fifth canon in the Nicene Council before cited.* And the reason is fetched from that principle which both Mr Cartwright and Didoclavius† assert, that we have communion with the universal church by means of being joined to a particular church; for communion with the universal church we cannot have immediately; and yet by virtue of a particular church, we enjoy the same kind of ordinances as if the whole universal church should meet together. Hence, therefore, as we have communion with the whole universal church by having communion with a particular church, so we are cast out of all churches by virtue of being cast out of one, the trust being committed by Christ to particular churches; and the law of ecclesiastical society and brotherly communion between churches requires it, that if they be cast out by one they are rejected by all, for there is that sympathy and concordance between all the members of this

* Book iii. chap. viii. of this discourse. † Altar. Damascen., cap. x. p. 853.

body, as one body, and so between particular churches, as members of this whole, that as when one member suffers all suffers, when one member rejoiceth all rejoiceth, so whom one church casteth out all churches casteth out, and whom one receives all receives by virtue of this communion. Or if, when it is bound by a particular church, it is bound in heaven, then all the earth over too, all churches being to reverence the act and judgment of a particular church, with whom Christ hath betrusted the keys. So as all the churches do not reject such an one by an act of jurisdiction, or of interest in the jurisdiction, but by the law of communion; and by the like law that there is among kingdoms, where there is leagues offensive and defensive, to be enemies to those that are enemies to any of them, and not to harbour those whom they have thrown out, and to be friends to those that they are friends to, and that are their allies.

4. There may be a communication, by sending out of elders from churches to churches that want, yet without jurisdiction, or the choosing of elders for them, or putting elders upon them. So anciently the bishops in cities did instruct and educate young men, to fit them for the ministry, whom afterward they sent out to the villages that wanted (as young men in colleges now under a master), but yet (as our divines against bishops have argued) that did not prove a jurisdiction, as in colleges it doth not. So the church in the Canticles, chap. viii. 8, 9, speaking of a sister church she had, which wanted breasts, by way of communication of good things, she afforded help, but yet without jurisdiction, for she was her sister. For still those elders which in that case they should send out and afford, and part withal from themselves, or any other church, are to be received and chosen by that church as elders to them, and no way by virtue of any jurisdiction in the church that lends them.

5. So also in matter of advice, there is communion between the churches. There is a double direction (as Bains* distinguisheth), one *potestativa, autoritativa*, the other *socia*, or social, as one servant, that hath more experience than another, may give advice to another upon occasion. An advice we acknowledge in churches, by virtue of this communion, but then let it be but advice, and where there is need. And so now in difficult cases, we acknowledge they are bound to advise with other churches, and in case of miscarriages, they are to be advised and admonished by other churches. But when they do advise that such a man should be excommunicated for such an act done, they do not add authority to that church. Jesus Christ hath furnished the church with sufficient authority in itself; only they add counsel, and direction, and countenance; moral strength or countenance they add, but not political power or authority. There is as much power in the church itself, to deal with its own members alone of itself, as in all the churches of the world put together; but this advice is given but as alms is given to a neighbour church. And again, that advice, as to the object of it, is properly but only to give their judgment of the rule; it is not a joint putting forth the act of administration of an ordinance, in a way of application of the censure to the persons. Neither is a congregation bound up by the institution of Christ to advise, so as, if they do not advise with a neighbour presbytery, the act is null and made void which they do, as, if by Christ's institution it were so that they ought to advise, such their case would be. In Babylon they had such elders as came to inquire, but not to judge, Ezek. xiv. 1, and xx. 1. But all this obligation to advise in such cases, and the help that the churches do give, ariseth (as our brethren themselves say, in their answers to our reasons†), *Ex charitate, ex debito mutuæ societatis co-*

* Diocesan Trial, p. 72. † Page 49.

lendæ, from charity, and the duty of maintaining mutual fellowship as is between friends and equals; *non ex debito inferioris conditionis ad præstandum obsequium*, not from any duty, obliging the inferior to obedience. And all that they there say afterward, page 50, unto line 16, we acknowledge. And since they say it is *ex debito societatis colendæ* only, and *ex charitate*, or as others have expressed it, *jure fraternitatis*, by the right of brotherhood, and that the communion between churches, according to their own expressions, is founded but upon that ground, hence therefore it can never grow up to *jus jurisdictionis*, a right of jurisdiction, for if the communion of these churches be in a way of fraternity, then the acts it ariseth to will be but acts of communion in a brotherly way; but for the communion of friendship to arise to acts of jurisdiction, exceedeth the sphere of it, as the acts of grace exceed the acts of nature. And if it be said that all acts in a church are acts of brotherly communion, it is answered, they are acts of brotherly communion in distinction to magisterial power, or such power as a master hath over his servants. It is not lordly power, but the power of spiritual jurisdiction is a middle thing, between that of mere brotherhood, which is between saint and saint, or church and church, and that which is lordly, for it is a power ministerial, erected by Jesus Christ, and by institution, having also a spiritual punishment put into their hands to execute it, with a promise to accompany it.

6. One church is bound to communicate to another their temporal things, to send alms, &c., and one man may be chosen by several churches, to carry in their several alms to several churches; as, 2 Cor. vii. 19, it is said of Titus, that he was chosen of the churches for that service, the contribution being to be carried from many churches. But it is not to be said that all those churches met when he was chosen; but his office, being the office of an evangelist, to travel up and down from church to church, he was by a tacit consent chosen, first by one, then of another, and so of a third; otherwise the apostle would have said, he was chosen of the church of such a province, if all the churches had been united into a synod, when it was done; but in that he saith churches, it implies, that they were apart when he was chosen. But if it had been such a common meeting, yet it was not an act of jurisdiction, it was by a common consent, to carry alms; and such acts in synods we acknowledge.

7. We acknowledge that there are *res communes*, things in common, that concern many churches alike in a brotherly way. There were between the apostles themselves some things that were *res communes*, as that they should confer to see how far they should agree in the same doctrine, and how far God had revealed the same things to them, as Paul went up to that end to confer with the apostles at Jerusalem, Gal. ii.; and yet there was not an authority that the greater number of the apostles had in matter of doctrine over another apostle. We acknowledge that the setting up ministers over particular churches is *res communis*, because the transactions of all businesses between neighbour churches is ordinarily done by the elders thereof; and therefore the bringing in anew of ministers to such associations should be with their privacy and knowledge. But that will not arise to this, that the neighbour-ministers have the power of ordination, the power of deposition, or that they have a negative vote, by way of jurisdiction, to which the church must, by virtue of an institution, submit; they may give the right hand of fellowship; and it may be a due, *ex debito fraternæ charitatis*, from the duty of brotherly love, that a church, when it chooseth its elders, should ask the right hand of fellowship from other churches; but it must be remembered that it is but giving the right hand of fellowship, it is not giving the

right hand of authority to choose them their elders, or to lay hands on them. Because that marriages are of a public concernment to a commonwealth, and to families in a commonwealth, therefore states are to be acquainted with marriages; but the power and authority to guide them whom they should marry lies in the parents, and in the persons that are to marry; and they may marry whom they will, only in the Lord. And such a respect to other churches, it is no more an act of subjection to them, as having jurisdiction, than, according to our brethren's principles, it is a subjection in the elders not to excommunicate, if the people (who they say have no interest of authority, or of a negative voice at all) should be against the excommunicating of a person.

As there are these ways of communion differing from government, so there are certain ties and bands,* some more general, some more special among all churches, by which this communion is to be exercised, as appeareth by Eph. iv.

There is, 1, that general tie and obligation of the church catholic, which we acknowledge to be the chief fundamental relation or obligation (transcendent above all others) of communion of churches; the other particular, being but several respects and relations that do knit more fastly by virtue of it.

2. We do acknowledge that every particular church is to be considered as a member of the church catholic, as, 1 Cor. xii. 27, the apostle speaks of the universal body in the words afore, and in the words after. But although it be a part of the church universal, yet not of the church universal, considered as a ministerial body that hath jurisdiction in it, but as being a mystical body, and it is therefore obliged to perform to other churches, by virtue of this catholic obligation, only all such duties of Christian communion, as proceedeth in a mystical way, as hath been shewn; so as we profess ourselves wronged, to have this put upon us, that in gathering of churches, we make separate churches from all the world, but do acknowledge as many and as great duties in a way of communion, to lie between us and all other churches, as according to their assertion there are duties of exercising jurisdiction and subjection respectively among themselves.

3. They are to look also to the other churches' elders, as elders, and accordingly to reverence them; but yet not as elders they carry jurisdiction over all churches about with them. It will be hard to shew wherein ministers have power of jurisdiction over persons that belong not to their own churches.

If it be acknowledged that they are elders, and so to be looked upon by other churches, yet still but by virtue, and in the way of a mystical communion, as all things in the world are the saints': 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 'Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.'

Again, there are two things to be considered in every elder. There is first his separation unto the work of the ministry, and unto Christ, that he is dedicated and set apart to him; and then, in the second place, there is his relation of an elder to this or that particular church.

Now, his particular relation of an elder to this or that church may cease by the church's ceasing, by the death of the members, or by his removal or absence, when yet his separation to Christ, and the relation that is between Christ and him, continueth. It is here as in the case of widows, as they were dedicated to Christ as widows, and should have waxed wanton against Christ if they had married; so he, if he should (unless upon an absolute necessity) divert to another calling, he would offend against Christ. And if

* Vide Zanch. in Eph. iv., in tom. vi. oper.

his relation to a church should thus cease, yet the blessing of Christ, in respect of his dedication to him, might follow him in his preaching unto those who yet perhaps would not acknowledge him to be their elder, in respect of relation to them. And the power of jurisdiction that he hath together with other elders, is (for the exercise of it) in respect of his fixed relation to that particular church to whom he is an elder; and therefore, although in many ministerial acts he may have the blessing of an elder secretly accompanying of him from Christ, yet he cannot claim the power of an elder in respect of jurisdiction. The apostles themselves had the blessing of apostles and the ministers of Christ, in their preaching to them that were without: and yet they had not a jurisdiction ecclesiastical over them that were without: 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' saith Paul, 1 Cor. v. 12.

Again, our divines have distinguished that there is *potestas ordinis*, and *potestas jurisdictionis*, in ministers and elders, power of order and power of jurisdiction; and that there are acts which are acts of mere power of order of his office as an elder, which he may perform alone, as to preach, and the like, and that power he may carry along with him wherever he goes, because he performs it personally in respect of his dedication to God and Christ; but the power of jurisdiction is a farther thing, which therefore he exerciseth with other elders, and with other elders not materially considered, but as formed up into the relation of presbytery, to a church which is to be the seat of it. Power of jurisdiction is an external power, and therefore dependeth upon an external relation to men; but the blessing and power that accompanieth his ministerial acts, to preach, and the like, that depends principally upon his being dedicated unto God, and is internal, and hath a more special relation to God, according to which relation men, wherever he cometh, reverence him and receive him, and the blessing of God may accompany him; and therefore this power of jurisdiction with others is not to be extended beyond the seat, the church, to which he hath relation. As is the case also of magistrates, if you could suppose, that besides the relation of a king to his people, in respect of which he hath a jurisdiction as a king over them, that there were such a dedication and separation of him to this office, that wherever he came, he were a king in respect of some acts, had a kingly spirit, kingly wisdom, to give counsel in any diet or assembly of kings and princes in the world; he might be received in all such, to perform such acts, when yet he could not perform an act of jurisdiction, because that is founded upon that special relation he hath to his own people.

And it is in respect of the communion of churches, and other elders, as it is in respect of churches, and the brethren of other churches. If the brethren of other churches, few or more, occasionally come to a particular church in a city, where a mart of men coming from many cities is kept, if they receive them to all the mere previleges of that church, by virtue of their church communion, yet they would not receive them so as to sit and vote with them in the choice of officers, or the like, because that is an act that properly concerns that particular church whereof he is to be an officer. So answerably, a particular church may receive the elders of other churches, and receive them as elders in respect of some acts, as preaching and the like, but not in respect of acts of jurisdiction, which we believe our brethren themselves would deny to the elders of other churches. As, for example, if upon an occasion the elders of other churches, belonging to other presbyteries, should be present at some one classical presbytery, although they would receive them as elders, and reverence them as such, yet they would not have them to sit with them, and vote, so as that the vote of those

strange elders, which yet they acknowledge elders, should over-rule, or cast the acts of their presbytery. They would perhaps hear their advice, and their judgment as elders, but not admit them to acts of jurisdiction and ecclesiastical authority; because that that dependeth upon relation to such a seat or corporation of several churches, according to their principles, but to the seat of a particular congregational church, according to ours.

CHAPTER X.

That though it were granted that the elders of one church might exercise acts of authority and jurisdiction in another occasionally, and when called to do so by that church, yet from this cannot be concluded that authority over particular congregations which our presbyterian brethren challenge.

But if the elders of other churches were capable to exercise the acts of jurisdiction occasionally in some cases over churches which they have not a constant relation of eldership unto, by virtue of the catholic communion of churches, yet the seat in which, and the bounds of extent over which this jurisdiction should be exercised, must still be a particular congregation. And the call by which this jurisdiction is to be exercised, should be occasionally from that congregation, in case of want or need; which therefore should, in such cases, stand instead of a fixed and a constant relation that elders do bear to that church, the call being occasional and from themselves, in case of need, as the jurisdiction they exercise is but merely occasional, and for that time. And so by this means, still as the right bounds, that Christ hath instituted for the seat of jurisdiction, is kept unto and not exceeded, so the power of the congregation itself is hereby also preserved. But it is another thing, which by virtue of the catholic communion of churches, and the elders thereof, that the presbyterian divines do challenge, and would erect according to their principles. They do challenge an association to be an institution of Christ, by virtue of which the greater company of elders of other churches may assume and challenge a power over any congregation in that association, and so erect a constant and an ordinary consistory, whereby not only the bounds and limits set by Christ for the seat of jurisdiction are transgressed and exceeded, but an unlawful power is erected and set over the churches, not only in respect of the constancy of it, but in respect also of the want of that relation of being elders to them, which is the foundation of the constant exercise of jurisdiction.

So as the question will not be, whether by virtue of this catholic communion a particular congregation may make use of the elders of another congregation to ordain, to assist them in excommunication, &c., and so they may come to have power in a particular church, by their special and peculiar call, for such an act at such a time (though this will not be acknowledged by us); but the question is, whether by Christ's institution they may erect a judicatory and challenge a subjection from all the churches. In the other way, the congregations do not subject themselves nor their liberty, but make use of that ministry of an elder which Christ hath put upon them; even as in arbitrations, or in references unto other churches, they do not subject themselves to other churches, it being done occasionally and by their consent whom they would single out to be the arbitrators. So as it is one thing, that there may occasionally be an exercising of an elder's power in another's congregation, and it is another thing that it should be assumed and challenged (which is the thing that remains further to be proved by the

presbyterial divines), as it is one thing for a child under age, though he should not govern himself, to have liberty to choose a guardian for the time; but it is another thing that a company of men should assume to be his guardians for ever. It would be one thing for a corporation to send to another corporation for their recorder, a man skilful in the law, to perform the office of a recorder, with a jury at their sessions, they now wanting one, or there falling out a case of difficulty wherein their own doth need assistance; but it would be another thing for the recorders of several corporations in a country, to go and challenge, by virtue of association, and the common law of communion in the kingdom, a constant power of jurisdiction to be exercised over them.

And in this case, the communion of churches in respect of members *qua* members, and of elders *qua* elders, answer one another according to our principles. For as the members of another church, if they come to a particular church, and are received by their consent by them (and so for that time become as one body with them, by virtue whereof they receive the sacrament amongst them, as being for this act incorporated, and as one bread with them occasionally), in this they do not receive merely and simply as members of another church, distinctly and apart considered, although by virtue of their being members of another church, but they are thereby for that time occasionally received into that church, *ad tantum*, so far, as to enjoy such and such a privilege. So as the sacrament in this is not said to be given to the members of two churches apart considered, but to one church, as thus making one, though upon a different respect. And so it is also in their receiving elders (if we may make that supposition) to perform acts of eldership occasionally, they do it not in this single and apart consideration, that they are simply elders of other churches, as if, considered only as such, they may make a consistory met out of this church to be over this church, and so excommunicate; but they come to and are present in and with that church, being called by them and received as elders for that act, and for that time as one with them; so as the acts which they do perform are acts as of that church or of elders in that church, and are not to be considered as acts of other elders that have power over that church.

Though ministers thus should be supposed to have, in respect of their dedication to God and to Christ, a passive capacity to be used for any ministerial act in any church, by virtue of the communion of churches, yet it would be electively and upon the call of that church; but that they should have an active power, so as to come unto congregations, and say, We ought to have this power amongst you, by virtue of Christ's institution, and you ought to associate with us, for all acts of government are common; and thus to challenge, as elders, a power upon occasion in any or all churches in the world, this is that which was properly the prerogative of an apostle. The greatest thing in the apostles for their extent of power lay in this, not only that when they came to a church they were capable of being called to join with a sister presbytery and eldership, when they wanted ministers and elders; but it lay in this, that whenever they came to any church they could challenge this, as having an universal call as apostles from Jesus Christ, and so they had authority active which they might assume. And if it were granted by us, that ordinary ministers succeed the apostles, so far as to have a passive capacity and power to be called to exercise their ministry in all or any church, yet to assume the other were to step into the apostles' throne. The power of authority of jurisdiction is an active thing, not a passive; it is not as a dead instrument, that may be used; it is not simply

to have the gift and ability to judge, but it is to have the power and authority to judge, which, if the church should not call them unto they might call upon the church, regarding it to be their duty to exercise it for them; as the power of government or jurisdiction of a king is not a mere passive capacity, but it is a power to command them that are under him, which he is to perform and exercise among them; it is the authority that gives the calling.

And in this respect, the arguments that our brethren use to bring, that elders may exercise some acts of elders in others' churches, as that they may preach, &c., and are to be received as elders in other churches, by virtue of the catholic communion of churches, are no way sufficient to prove and establish that jurisdiction in their way. For,

1. It doth not follow, because they may do one act of ministry, as of preaching or administering the sacrament, that therefore they may do all; no more than it would follow, that because a man may preach alone, baptize alone of himself, that therefore of himself alone he may exercise jurisdiction. Unto acts of jurisdiction there is a formality, and the formality doth lie in their relation to such or such a seat or subject over whom the jurisdiction is exercised, and so and so bounded, and that by special institution.

2. It will not follow, that if they may exercise as elders one act of ministry, therefore all of jurisdiction, because there may be some acts of ministry which are properly belonging to the church universal, as universal, and such acts we judge preaching and baptizing to be; and therefore we read that baptism was done both out of a church relation, and without the presence of a church, as the baptizing of the eunuch by Philip. But so ordination is not, so the Lord's supper is not; baptism we rather take to be an ordinance of the church universal: 'One faith, one Lord, one baptism,' Eph. iv. 5. But the Lord's supper is an ordinance of a particular church, making one body and one bread, and consisteth in a communion. One apostle and one man could not receive the supper of the Lord together, because they could not make one church, for this is made essential to it, 1 Cor. x., 'We being many, are one bread;' therefore it is called, 'the communion of the body of Christ.' But one apostle may baptize one man when alone, and so we think one minister may do it at this day, if he had converted him.

3. If the elders of other churches should have power to judge and determine things in a doctrinal way, to give the rule upon occasion; it will not follow, that they have the power of juridical application of excommunication according to that rule. The apostles might deliver the doctrine of faith, as apostles to them that were without, when yet they could not juridically judge them that were without. The pharisees, by their doctrine, did bind burdens upon men's consciences, and that in their sermons, when they sat in Moses his chair, when yet they did not bind by way of censure; yea, every minister may doctrinally deliver the rule, when yet alone, and that as a minister, he cannot exercise an act of jurisdiction. We see this in civil power in kingdoms: the judges of the kingdom altogether met cannot condemn a man without a jury, though they may deliver what is law, and say what is the rule; yea, though the house of commons in parliament, in an extraordinary way, by way of bill, may adjudge a man to death, yet in an ordinary course they are not witnesses to the fact; and although they have power of making all the laws of the kingdom, they do not give an oath as the house of peers doth. The assembly that now sitteth,* they are betrusted with power in a doctrinal way, to give their judgments what shall reform the kingdom; and

* The assembly of divines at Westminster.

their judgment herein is to be looked upon as the judgment of so many elders of several churches; but they have not power to administer a censure.

4. Because they may come to have as elders authority in any church, in the way fore-mentioned, occasionally, electively (the power of the church being seen, in calling them upon such an occasion together to assist them, and to be present with them, they exercising that power but in that church, and jointly with that church, and as an entire act of that church, whereto for the present they perform the office of elders), it will not follow, that therefore they may in all churches usurp a power over them, and call upon them, and challenge it from them. This will not follow from the other, because, as was said, the privilege of government is given unto the church as the seat of it, and is therefore to be drawn down to it, exercised in it, and not to be claimed out of it.

The one therefore running thus in a natural moral way, the other by a special institution, forming up a body on purpose, and arming it with a power, over and above what the natural law of communion and non-communion reacheth to, which is to deliver unto Satan, and to perform all acts of admonition and censure in order thereunto; hence, therefore,

1. This communion with other churches is not in a fixed set way, but occasional. The Sanhedrim was a set and a fixed court, and therefore by institution; but this communion is but as the communion of saints one with another in a general way. Hence,

2. It being in a moral way to other churches, and the elders thereof, therefore the obligation for matters of ending of controversies is answerable and suitable. They are not bound to go to the next neighbour church, but to any other whom they do most reverence, or who are most fit and proper to end the controversy; therefore Antioch sent to Jerusalem. If it were by institution, it would take in the neighbour churches, as in the case of murder the next city was to make an atonement. When James doth bid us confess our sins one to another, in case a man be so troubled with lust, so that he is called to confess it to another, the obligation doth not require him necessarily to confess it to his minister, or to the next saint or brother he meeteth; for it is not laid upon him in a way of institution, but upon a moral ground; and answerably he is morally to consider who is the fittest man to confess this sin unto, and will be faithful and secret, and is able to ease him; so that it runs not in a way of institution of set persons.

3. Hence, therefore, that neighbour churches should have a ground and a warrant to call a neighbour church in question, or to an account, is not by way of power and authority, as, if it ran in a way of institution, it should be; but it is by way of offence, and therefore they are to do it, when they are offended with their proceedings and with their miscarriages. So then, as the subjection of a man or a brother in the case of offence, to forbear such a practice which is otherwise indifferent to him, is not by virtue of any authority his brother hath over him, but it is in a moral way; so it is in this case.

4. Whereas the analogy of Mat. xviii. is urged to be as well between a church offending and other churches, as between a brother and a congregation; that when they are offended, they are to tell it to a greater number of churches; we shall not be against this analogy for the like way of proceeding, only we are against the like authority of proceeding. If other churches will deal with a sister church in the way of moral communion specified, let them observe the same analogy, and we shall submit to it; but if they will erect from that analogy the like authority and power of jurisdiction, unto that we deny the analogy to reach, because that in the church universal, and the communion thereof as such, Christ hath placed no such jurisdiction.

CHAPTER XI.

That churches in the same nation are obliged to maintain a nearer communion, one with another, than what all churches, though separated by distinct kingdoms, are bound to by virtue of their catholic obligation.

As there is the general bond of which I have discoursed, that knits all churches together, which, like to that which the apostle speaks of charity, is above all, and runs through all, and gives strength to all other, so there are more special relations and bonds which knit some churches to a more near communion than others; even as in a congregational church, although there is a common bond and tie which knits all the members together, yet there are special bonds and ties besides, by which that fellowship is improved more between some of the members than others, as the relation of man and wife, servant and master, friend and friend, all which are occasions of more converse, and so of edifying one another more.

And herein we give and acknowledge much to those national relations of being under one common civil government, if considered as a bond or tie, which makes the communion more near, and occasioneth more obligation of duty. As also there is a closer communion between churches that are more near, neighbouring in the same city and the same vicinity, because they have a more special occasion of converse and of knowing each other's affairs. But yet still all those bonds and ties, by which churches are thus knit together, doth not give neighbour churches, or a national church, power of jurisdiction; for it runs in a way of that mystical communion of the church universal, only there is a ground and occasion of exercising that communion more nearly. Thus, in the churches of a nation, many advantages do arise (we acknowledge) unto churches thereby, as that they have the benefit of the common laws to protect them under the Christian magistrate, who is to be a nursing father and a nursing mother to them, and so to unite them together, and make that mystical communion more entire. But the power of the magistrate cannot set up or form them into any other ecclesiastical power and government than Jesus Christ hath instituted. What communion Christ would have to be amongst churches, the magistrate may exact of them and keep them to it, but he cannot raise up a new kind of communion, though their having one language, their having one government, makes a greater nearness of it. The apostles write therefore unto the churches of Asia, as in one nation, or in one province. Thus Paul, writing to the church of Corinth, writes to the saints of Achaia; and many churches in Achaia may be called Achaia, for so it is in the apostle's style: 'Achaia was ready a year ago,' saith he, 2 Cor. ix. 2, meaning many churches in Achaia. So we may say *England* for *the churches of England*, and the name may be given from the nation; but the name, with the word *church*, is never put together as being a national church, cast into one body, in respect of ecclesiastical government and jurisdiction, as the kingdom is for civil government. The apostle, therefore, when he writes to churches of a nation, calling them churches, and not church, doth argue that the common relation between them was by way of communion, each reserving their jurisdiction as several churches, but not as cast under one jurisdiction, as being one church. Yea, perhaps the name church may be given unto a nation in a mystical respect; that which is given to the whole being given to any part or number of saints. The strangers that were scattered all over lesser Asia, 1 Peter i. 1, are called 'a flock,' 1 Peter v. 2. And so our Saviour Christ saith he had

sheep that were not of that fold; *i. e.* that were not of that nation, but that were Gentiles, and yet they are both called one church in the general; for he would make them (both Jew and Gentile) one fold; but they are so called in respect of their mystical relation, as under him their shepherd, not in respect of government.[3] Peter calls the Jews that were scattered a flock in the general, distinct from the Gentiles, because they could not perhaps understand the tongues of the Gentiles, and therefore kept together, as Jews distinct.

So then we shall grant very far to national communion of churches kept in a mystical way. As,

1. We grant that God under the gospel hath made a covenant with, and a promise unto, nations (in respect of the gospel) as well as unto families.* Paul, when some in Achaia had received the gospel, calls them the first fruits of Achaia, Rom. xvi. 5. He calls them the first fruits, as a sign that more would come of the same nation; but he would not baptize men of the same nation upon it, or upon a bare outward profession, as the apostles did not therefore baptize all the nation of the Jews because some received the gospel as the first fruits. Abraham's covenant, indeed, goes to nations as well as to families: Isa. lii. 15, 'He shall sprinkle many nations.' And God removes the light of the gospel from nations as well as from particular churches. The gospel itself becomes a national blessing; and we see that one nation hath more light in one age than another; as the Grecians and those in Asia once had, and now we Europeans in the northern parts have. That part of Britain which is now called Wales had it more than the rest of the nation when Austin the monk came into this island, those that opposed him being only found there, whereas now the whole kingdom hath had it since, and the gospel becometh a national blessing; and when the practices and privileges of it are established by the law, it cometh to be a national right. And when the civil magistrate by law doth countenance religion, God doth bless the nation, and bless the magistrate for it, as he did the house of Obed-edom for the ark's resting there, 2 Sam. vi. 11, 12.

2. There are national duties, which the churches in a nation, as they are a nation, owe unto God in a joint way, as to keep solemn fasts, and days of thanksgiving for national blessings, or for threatened judgments, as Nineveh did.

3. In case that the churches of a nation are corrupted, they may have assemblies and conferences, where mutually it may be seen what light these churches can hold forth; so to make a reformation, and to become a new lump, they may have such assemblies to direct them to do it. In Babylon, the Jews had elders to come one to another, Ezek. xiv. 1, xx. 1; but they had not the power of a Sanhedrim, which was instituted by God; that was only proper to them while they were in the land, and the promise was to it, as being in the place that God should choose. They came to inquire, but not to judge; and the prophet was with them, who yet had not the power of jurisdiction as a prophet. Or otherwise, at other times, we acknowledge that national assemblies may be chosen out by parliament for national respects to advise them.

4. And by virtue of oneness of language, and of affinity, churches in one nation are able (by virtue of this bond as a band and tie to knit together) to edify one another more than other churches, as by writing books in the same language, speaking the same tongue, &c. Yea, and as they are churches in

* Yet we understand this in the same sense as Rev. v. 9 interprets it of the redeemed out of all nations, so that all the people in nations will never grow up to be members of churches, especially not till the call of the Jews.

a nation, as they walk more exactly, God will give such a nation more light than he doth another nation. These, and many more such advantages as these are, in ways of communion, we do acknowledge belong to them as a nation; and the same also by reason of neighbourhood to neighbour churches.

But to cast all these churches into such a national government ecclesiastical, and such subordinations as presbyterian government casts them into (such as, being a nation in respect of civil government, they are cast into), and that they should be obliged, in respect of a national bond, to an uniformity, or obliged, for uniformity's sake, to the same pitch and model, that one particular church should not practise further than another, or hold forth more light in matters of doctrine than another; but that there must be one standard for all, and that they should be obliged to this by virtue of a national constitution; such an uniformity as this, we think, is prejudicial to the churches, the apostle's rule holding in this, that so far as we have attained, we should walk by the same rule. So the churches in a nation may meet to see how far they have attained, and to convince one another, and so establish by common consent a common rule amongst them so far; but so as that, if any be otherwise minded, they should wait in this till God reveal it in his time; for otherwise, the purer churches, which will still be the fewer, must be kept and conformed to the light of the impurer, which would soon corrupt them. And the greater compass is taken to make the uniformity, still it will be the worse, because the greater part is still more corrupt.

And therefore for mere uniformity's sake, to make a general rule that should bind weak and strong alike, when that general rule also is made in favour of the weak only (as to prescribe forms of prayer, because many, or the most of ministers, cannot pray conceived prayer, or to make one and the same form of government for all churches, because many or most churches have not ministers or a people fit to govern; or to give prudential rules for worship which should bind all, because some elders of churches, as now constituted, have not wisdom to direct themselves, and yet are suffered still to be elders), thus to bind up both weak and strong under the same rule, and to restrain the one for the sake of the other, we think is contrary to the apostolical rule. As men in a personal walking are to be left to a more or less purity, so churches too; and there is no reason that those that have a further light should be retarded by those that have not.

And that which we say of the churches of a nation may, in their several respects (so far as the bond of tie will hold), be said of the churches in a city, or in any neighbourhood. Yet so as we conceive that always neighbourhood is not so near a bond to induce churches to associate as correspondency of principles and practices. As in Germany, where there are churches that are Lutheran churches, others that are of the Calvinists, the neighbourhood is not so near a tie or bond as agreement in principles to associate themselves. Though this principle is to be held sacred by virtue of the universal catholic communion, that so far forth as churches have anything that is good in them, so far forth (whether in respect of doctrine or worship, or the like) there is to be a communion held with them (when in practice there cannot, yet in judgment there ought to be) to acknowledge them the churches of Christ and the ministers of Christ, and approve whatever is good in them; and if in one practice we cannot join, yet in others we may. This we do acknowledge to be the universal law of communion between church and church throughout the world.

And we do acknowledge that it is possible that a congregational govern-

ment may be adequate with the nation; for if it were a nation of all visible saints according to the rules of the word (as the nation of the Jews when called perhaps shall be, Rom. xi. 28), then the nation and the church would be adequate. But a few in nations come to be saints, and then the government must be suited to them; and if you would make a rule for a whole nation where there is but a few saints, though the whole profess Christian religion, then the rules whereby Jesus Christ would have his churches governed, as by the people's choosing the officers, and the people's having an interest in censures, would not universally be applicable, and such a government would not suit to a whole nation in a congregational way; but the fault is not in the government, but it lies in the persons. Castellus Bononiensis would say that the old government of churches would not be available, *nisi ecclesiæ quoque statum antiquum obtineant.* The rules whereby Jesus Christ would have his church governed will not suit churches unless they have that state and constitution for members which in the apostles' times they had, which in the common profession of Christianity in a nation and parishes, as now more generally they are constituted in respect of members, cannot be.

CHAPTER XII.

That though no church or churches have the power to excommunicate any other churches, yet they have authority of declaring non-communion with them upon occasion of just offence.

The upshot of the difference between us and our brethren lies in this principle, that all church government consisting in a spiritual instituted punishment, or being in order to it, which is properly called a censure and an ἐπιτιμία, a punishment, by the apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 6 (for that is properly government which hath a power of inflicting punishment as such), since excommunication is properly a spiritual punishment in a strict sense so taken; hence therefore, where that only is placed, there is a government placed in a strict sense; and that which makes excommunication, as it differs from non-communion, to be a punishment, lies in this:

1. That it is a delivering up to Satan, which because it superaddeth to the severing of a person or persons from external communion, which is common to it with that which we call non-communion, therefore it must be a special institution, and cannot be founded upon a natural ground; for who hath power to give up a person to Satan, when any church hath thrown him out, but only Christ? And hence other churches, after a particular church hath excommunicated a man, cannot excommunicate him further; they cannot give him up to Satan again, for that act is already done if he be rightly excommunicated, and all their act can be but a pronouncing non-communion.

2. Excommunication and non-communion differ thus, that in excommunication the person is to look upon himself as cast out of communion with Christ, and he hath his sins judicially bound upon his conscience, not only in a doctrinal way (for so his sins are bound when a brother reproveth him), but as by such an ordinance, wherein Jesus Christ doth, as a judge from heaven, bind his sin upon his conscience, having promised to do so upon the church's binding sin upon him; but declaring non-communion, they do not anew judicially bind his sin.

3. In non-communion there is not so much an authoritative act over others, as an endeavour to keep themselves pure. It is indeed an authoritative act over others in this sense, or the church that doth keep another church, or

the persons of another church, from communion with them, exercise authority in this sense, that they having authority from Christ positively to partake in such and such ordinances, and to receive men thereunto, they receive only such and such members (although of other churches), and refuse others. Both these acts are comparatively (take both positive and negative together) acts of authority, for they proceed by way of consequence from the authority they have to administer ordinances amongst themselves; yet the keeping out of that person is not an act of jurisdiction over that person, as the keeping out of an heathen is not an act of jurisdiction over him.

4. Look what difference is between suspension from the sacrament and excommunication within a particular church; the same may serve to express the difference of excommunication and non-communion by other churches. The act of suspension from the sacrament is but by virtue of the mystical communion that is between all saints, but excommunication is by virtue of the communion which the members of a particular church have one with another.

If it be said that they differ thus, that suspension is but for a time, but excommunication is a final sentence, the answer is, that even suspension is for ever, unless the man repents, as well as excommunication; but they differ only in this, that the one is a withdrawing from a brother to keep themselves and the ordinances pure, but the other is an authoritative giving him up to Satan in the name of the Lord Jesus. Suspension therefore is after the sin, till they try whether he will repent or no, but excommunication is when they have tried, and they see he doth not repent.

Of non-communion there may be two grounds.

1. The one is when the church urgeth, suppose in some one ordinance (as kneeling at the Lord's supper), that practice upon a person which to him is sin, although in all other respects that church to him is as pure a church as any is in the world. In this case he is forced to a non-communion, that is, to a forbearing communion with them in that practice, and in that ordinance wherein especially public communion with the saints lies; and this is done without any censuring of that church, but only professing his not being able to see that light and ground upon which he should have communion with them in it. Therefore those that leave other churches upon such grounds do not pronounce a sentence of non-communion with those churches, but do it merely and only to keep themselves pure and undefiled.

2. Another ground, or perhaps a second kind of non-communion, is this: whereas a church or churches do judge another church or churches to be corrupt in their doctrine, or in their countenancing such gross sins for which men should be excommunicated, and so are offended at those churches which being admonished do not repent, but continue obstinate. Now, such a kind of non-communion in these cases is materially for such kind of sins, and ought to be for such, as for which in a particular church excommunication is to be denounced against a member or members, and so both the one and the other do agree.

(1.) In the object matter of offence for which men proceed to the one or the other.

(2.) They may agree in this, that for the external act they are the same, and for the consequences of it too, so far as lies in their practice one toward another externally. For the outward substance of the act, they are both a denying outward communion in ordinances, and also from the consequent act, they are both of them a denying communion in ordinary converse.

Then (3) they agree in the analogy of their proceedings, that as in a particular church, in admonitions tending to excommunication upon impenitency

(upon which excommunication follows) there are these degrees of proceedings: first, to take two or three privately, then to give two or three admonitions in a public way ere they proceed to excommunication. So should other churches deal with a sister church offending, ere they proceed to non-communion.

If the question be asked, What institution there is for non-communion? we answer,

1. There needs no institution for it, since it ariseth from all the former principles, and is not an act of censure by way of institution, but according to the law of nature; and as the saints are taught of God to love one another, so they are taught of God to withdraw, and also any church to withdraw from those that live inordinately. As the mystical communion runs in a natural way, by reason of the law of love that is in the hearts of all the saints, so doth the law of non-communion.

2. It cannot be said that there is no warrant: for, 1. The same precept that warrants suspension warrants this, namely, the withdrawing from a brother that walks inordinately, as to what is in their power to give or refuse him fellowship in; and it is in the power of one church to give or refuse fellowship to other churches in their ordinances. So that it cannot be alleged that there is not a command for it, but only that there is not an institution for it; it is a duty, though not an act of authority. 2. That which warrants any Christian not to bid an heretic good speed, which yet is not an act of jurisdiction, nor to receive them into their houses, warrants also this. 3. That which warranted Timothy, being a minister to guide and direct the churches, to 'turn away from those who had only a form of godliness, denying the power of it,' 2 Tim. iii. 5, warrants also this non-communion of which we are discoursing. It was written to him by way of prophecy, and so to all ministers and churches in the latter age, when the profession of Christianity should grow as common, and be carried by the same grounds of common education and imperial laws, as the pagan religion before had been. When he foresaw (all, in a general implicit way, thus professing Christianity) the churches might be in danger of being defiled by holding communion indifferently with all, since the case is such, that many should have a form of godliness, and deny the power of it, although professing religion; therefore, saith the apostle, 'from such turn away.' 4. What one apostle did to another in case of offence, the same one church may do to another, upon the same grounds. One apostle had not power to excommunicate another in a way of censure; neither had Paul power to excommunicate Peter, or admonish him in an authoritative way; but to admonish him by way of that mystical communion which all saints owe one to another, and so was due from one apostle to another: Paul accordingly did admonish Peter, and withstand him to his face. And when in that contention between Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas was in the wrong (for he went upon a carnal ground, because Mark was his sister's son, and so therefore he would have him along with him, though formerly he deserted the service, for which Paul would not take him into fellowship with them), they, upon this occasion, part fellowship one from another, and Paul did justly do it from Barnabas, though he could not excommunicate him.

If the question be, why Jesus Christ should put this ordinance of excommunication and delivering up to Satan in a particular church rather than in a multitude of other churches; I answer, Although the reason of institutions is only the will of Christ, yet all his constitutions are consonant to spiritual reasons, and the consonancy of this particular instance to spiritual reasons may appear in this;—

1. Because in the proceeding of other churches with another church offending, they can but have half that power as present to concur in it, which the ordinance of Christ hath settled excommuncation upon; for there cannot both elders and people meet in synods ordinarily; and yet in a congregation both elders and people must concur to excommunication, as a judge and a jury use to do. Now, to suppose that the power of this ordinance should be transferred to those that have but half the interest, to a company of elders only, where the concurrence of the people as present is wanting; to suppose that in a congregation both these should concur, and that in a synod, which hath the greater power, but one of these should concur, would not be uniform to this ordinance. Dealings with other churches must be transacted by commissions, and by way of representation; and the power of excommunication is not given to a representative company. And for these to have power to take upon them to excommunicate not only persons but churches, when yet to excommunicate persons in a church, both people and elders concur, is yet less imaginable.

2. Again, this honour God hath given to his church of saints, that if the formal authority of Jesus Christ be not placed in them, yet virtually it should be exercised as amongst them, so as the unanimous concurrence of their spirits, as well as of the ministers, should have an influence unto this ordinance, or should be concomitant to this ordinance; and that therefore the power of Jesus Christ should be put forth: 1 Cor. v. 4, 'When you are gathered together,' both elders and people. As the virtue of the loadstone is then put forth when it is set in steel, and as the authoritative power of an act of the king and state is exerted when both houses of parliament are met and in their presence, without which it would not be an act of authority to ratify and establish laws, so is [it] here; the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver a man up to Satan must be in the presence of the people; and as though the eye alone sees, yet as seated in such a body, so suppose all the power should be in the elders, by which a man is delivered up to Satan, yet in the elders as seated in this church. And therefore, to take a company of elders abstracted from their people, Jesus Christ hath not given this power unto them, as the laws of this kingdom hath not thought fit to give the power of condemning any man to the judges alone, but as concurring with the jury.

3. The enjoyment of a constant communion, as in a congregation formed up into a fixed body for worship, is only proper to a particular congregation, and the members thereof; therefore the throwing out of such an enjoyment, out of such a body (having this punishment annexed to it, to be given up to Satan when he is thrown out), is most proper to it rather than to any other body, where a man comes but to meet occasionally; and as it only is the seat of fixed worship, so it only is the seat of throwing one out of the seat of worshippers, and of delivering him up to Satan. And the nature of the ordinance is such, as that it could be placed but in one seat, and therefore that seat which hath it first should only have it; for a man can be delivered to Satan but once.

Now, the next question will be, how far this law of communion of churches will draw on a subjection of one church to another, and will tend to order churches? and what proceeding, by virtue hereof, one church may have toward another? and what one church, or many churches, is to give to any church?

We lay this for a general ground, that as there are particular duties, and in a manner for the external part all the same kind of duties, which are to pass between a particular church and the members thereof; therefore, by analogy, there may be the same proceedings used and courses taken for the

discharge of these duties between church and church occasionally, as is amongst the others. As,

1. There is an obligation of one church over another, by virtue of this communion, to inquire in case of jealousy or common fame, and report how it fares with them. And therefore there may be an association of churches, whereby, in the meetings of their elders or others deputed, there may be inquiries of miscarriages, which may be eqivalent to those of annual visitations which have been amongst us.

2. If that persons wronged do complain, and their complaints do arise to that height and appearance of injustice, as that there is a just offence occasioned, in such cases, or in whatever other cases of miscarriages, one church or many churches are bound to give an account; and in cases doubtful, to give oaths to clear things, and to swear witnesses to help to find out the truth.

3. For the judging part, they may declare against churches, by way of declaration doctrinally, that they have thus and thus transgressed the rule; they may condemn them, as having sinned against light, as perverters of the faith; they may admonish them and threaten them in the name of Christ,—that is, for his name (his name is put for his honour), and so for his honour's sake that is called upon them; his name is put also for power;—they may declare that they are offended as a church, and that it is a church act as from them, and so deal with them as a church offended with a church delinquent; but still they act not by a power over them given by institution from Christ; they do not act from a power of delivering up to Satan, but only with the power of Christ's word, and threatenings laid afore the offending church.

4. When by way of sentence they profess to hold no communion with them, that sentence yet is not that of excommunication, for therein, though they exercise church power over their own selves in relation to themselves, binding themselves as a church not to have communion with them, yet it is not an act of authority over them, as a lord of a manor meddles not with another's mill when he interdicts his tenants to grind there, for it is not an act of jurisdiction over the other, but only over his own tenants.

If the question be, What fruit and effect there may be from regulating churches in this way? we answer,

1. That the efficacy of all means lies in the blessing of Christ. Now, there being two ways of church proceedings, one by way of communion of churches and the law of nature, the other by institution, there is to either, in their kind, a promise of Christ. The admonition of one saint to another, though not in church fellowship, as it proceedeth by virtue of the communion that is among saints, and as a duty of one saint to another, so it hath a promise of blessing answerable. The exhortation of one saint to another hath a blessing often to convert, though preaching by officers be the only instituted means, and so is it here; therefore such proceedings, by way of admonition and by way of non-communion, have the promise of the blessing of Christ, as well as that of excommunication in a particular church.

2. In a moral way there is a great deal of efficacy in these means to work upon men, 1, a convincing of a church offending of their sin, and of the error of their way; 2, there is a testimony given against them; 3, there is a shaming of them, for the design of such withdrawing is (as the apostle saith, 2 Thes. iii. 14), that they may be ashamed. There is, 4, a depriving them of the privileges of communion with all other churches.

3. In an external way, this is like to work as much as excommunication

itself, especially being backed by the civil magistrate, as excommunication useth to be.

4. It is more suitable for churches to deal with another church, or with multitudes, with provinces, with churches in this way, than to assume a power of delivering them up to Satan.

If it be said that excommunication, being the highest supreme means, if this means should not be used there is the most efficacious means wanting, I answer, that God doth not always establish that means that is most efficacious for one sort or kind of persons, or in all cases, that he doth in some and unto some; neither is it necessary, therefore, that what is in itself to be supposed the most efficacious means should be applied to churches from a greater number of churches, as the argument would hold forth, for according to this reason, God should have appointed apostles always infallibly to have governed churches, because that was the most efficacious means, and was once extant in the world. And it may as well be said and objected, as it is by the papists, that unless there be an apostolical seat assisted with infallibility, there is not an efficacious remedy for all controversies, and that God hath not provided for his church in our age as he did for his church in the first age. But it suited his wisdom to leave the churches in after ages to have recourse, in respect of government, to a means less efficacious. The like he did with the church of the Jews, to whom he stirred up prophets in all ages till after the captivity, but then left them to the ordinary guidance.

BOOK VI

Of the constitution of a particular congregational church.—The rise, institution, and definition of it.—A comparison between it and the church universal.—That Christ hath given to his saints a right and liberty of gathering into such holy societies.—That in doing so they are not guilty of sinful separation or schism.—Of the divers kind of officers in a church.—That there is an institution for each sort.—That the pastor and teacher are equal in authority and power.—Of the exercise of the communion of saints, which the members of a church ought to have, one with another.

CHAPTER I.

The reasons why God and Christ would have a church, as a seat of divine worship, wherein they might be adored and praised.—What a church is.—That saints or persons regenerated and holy are the proper matter of it.—The church is either the universal mystical church, or a particular congregation.—The grounds of this distinction shewed from Scripture.

It is the practice of all societies and corporations at first embodying themselves, to read over their charter. Thus at the assizes the commission is first read, and in parliaments the writ by which they are summoned is opened.

It is then requisite, when any number of saints do by mutual consent join into so holy a fellowship as a church is, to shew what charter and commission they have for it from Jesus Christ. The question otherwise may be put to us (which was put to Christ, Mat. xxi. 23), 'By what authority we do these things'; which authority, if we are not able to produce, we incur that *premunire*, Acts xix. 40, 'We are in danger to be questioned' by God, by men, 'if there be no cause whereby we may give an account of this meeting.' The word is ἐκκλησίας, whence the name of ἐκκλησία is given to such a fellowship of saints.

All inferior civil societies do embody themselves by a liberty granted and derived from the head of the commonwealth they live in, especially when they take on them to exercise any judicial acts; therefore this holy divine fellowship must much more be authorised by Christ, the head of the church universal; since those joined in it take upon them the authority to judge them within it, as occasion is, 1 Cor. v. 12. As all meetings in civil affairs are said to be in the king's name, so we must prove this to be in Christ's name, and for this we have that known place, Mat. xviii. 20, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name,' &c. Where he speaks not of every assembly of saints, but of such an assembly as doth make and constitute a church, for (verse 17) those two or three to whom this promise is made are called the church; and by *name* is, among other things, chiefly meant the power and authority of Christ, and is usually so taken in Scripture. So,

Acts iv. 7, the pharisees take it, asking the apostles 'By what name or power have you done this?' and in that sense the apostles make answer: ver. 10, 'Know that by the name of Christ this man stands whole before you.'

That there is and ought to be a church, is the confession of all the professors of the name of Christ. Papists and protestants agree in this assertion, it being a principle of the gospel, universally assented to by all to whom the sound of the gospel is come; as that there is a God is owned by all to whom the sound or preaching of the works of God is come. As that notion of a God was preserved in the ruins of the fall, so the notion that there is a church hath been preserved, notwithstanding the apostasy and falling away of nations to antichrist, and accordingly hath been transmitted to us. And as that notion that there is a God was the occasion of an idolatry and false worship through darkness, and of worshipping a false God, not knowing the true, so this notion that there is a church on earth hath, through the like darkness, been the main occasion of all errors about ecclesiastical government, men not discerning what was the church which Christ intended.

And indeed, that God should have a church is exceeding natural and requisite.

1. The divine nature in God desires it. As it desires communication of itself to the creatures, that they might glorify him, so it designed a communication of itself to many, and to many together united, mutually to praise him. The Godhead itself is naturally communicated to three persons, who mutually rejoice each in the other, and together in the union and participation of such glorious attributes, Prov. viii. 30. There is a blessed fellowship between those three persons, and God would also have creatures taken up into the same fellowship, not only each apart with himself, but mutually together to glorify him, which is the nature of a church. Those three persons, that were three in one, would have a church of creatures also; and resolved, that many should become one, as they are one, John xvii. 21, 23. The gospel is called 'the fellowship of the mystery,' Eph. iii. 9. Wisdom also loves to open and cry her precious wares in place of concourse, Prov. i. 21, Ps. xxii. 22, Ps. xl. 9, 10. Christ, who was this wisdom of his Father, says, he had declared his faithfulness not to his brethren only apart, but together in the great congregation (Ps. xxxv. 18), because thereby glory and praises, being joint and mutual, are so much the more increased; for glory manifested results out of the apprehensions and encomiums of many joined: therefore God, ere he would so fully communicate himself, desires a meeting, and an assembly of the people. So Exod. xxv. 8, 'Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them;' and Exod. xxix. 42–44, 'There I will meet with you,' that is, when they are all met there. And therefore it is called in the original, the meeting-place; so that if there be a God, he will have a church to worship and praise him.

2. Jesus Christ desires it also, who was to be made glorious; and therefore was to have a church, that is, many united in one, whereof he might be the head. So Eph. i. 22, God gave him to be head to the church. It was a privilege to him to have a church, she is therefore given him; and as this was his desire too, his Father in answer bestows her on him: 'Ask and I will give thee,' Ps. ii. 8. As he was to be a head, so to have a body; in whom, as in a head, they might be gathered together in one, ver. 10. He was to have many brethren; and his desire was, that they might be gathered together about him. Thus he declares, Ps. xxii. 22, and thus he promises to them when assembled on earth, Mat. xviii., and thus he prays, John

xvii. 24, 'That he and they may be together.' So as if there be a Christ, there is to be a church also.

3. The divine nature in us (2 Peter i. 4) breathes after such a fellowship. As reason and understanding desires communion with men, since man is by nature (as he that had but nature said) *animal πολιτικον, sociabile*, a sociable creature, so a saint is too. As it was not good for Adam, the new creature of the first world, to be alone, so nor for the new creature of Christ's world. It was that one thing of David's desires, that is, the top, the chief of them: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired, to dwell in the house of the Lord.' The church, as they have a relation to Christ, so likewise one to another; for they are not an 'holy seed' only, but an 'holy nation, a royal kindred;' who, out of an instinct, desire fellowship one with another. 'They are taught of God' (says the apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 9); and, therefore, as natural instincts shew themselves in creatures, who, when new fallen from the dam, gather in a company about it, so a spiritual instinct shews itself in those, who, being new born, associate together. So in Philip. i. 5, Paul gives thanks for their 'fellowship in the gospel from the first day;' as if, when they were not an hour's standing, they desire it. And therefore, in the Acts, to be converted to the church and to the Lord are used promiscuously; they breathing after a church fellowship with the saints as well as with God.

But our business further, is to inquire what manner of church it is, which Christ would have erected, and unto which his promise is made that he will be in the midst of them.

We shall come the better to know what this church in particular is to be, if we inquire what the church in general is.

A church in general is an assembly of saints, of believers, of men called.

1. It is a company or assembly united. If there had been but one angel, or one man saved, he had not made a church. It is a body that hath many members: 1 Cor. i. 15, and Rom. xii. 6, 'We being many, are one body.' It is a nation, 1 Peter ii. 9; a flock, an household, a kingdom, a commonwealth, Eph. ii. 12. The same men that, considered apart, are called saints, collectively taken, are called the church.

2. A church is a company united in one, for without union they are not a church, but a confused multitude; therefore it is called one body, Eph. iv. 4, as there is one God, and one Spirit, &c., 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; and Eph. iv. 16, it is said to be knit together.

3. A church is a company of saints united in one. It is a society of believers who are called; as it is a nation for multitude and order, so it is a holy nation, 1 Peter ii. 9; as it is an household, so of faith; as it is a commonwealth, so of Israel, Eph. ii. 12; as it is a temple, so an holy temple, ver. 21. 'Holiness becomes thine house,' Ps. xciii. 5. It is a congregation, but of saints, Ps. lxxxix. 5: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'To the church of God at Corinth;' 'to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints,' not by invitation only, as if all to whom ever the gospel is preached might have that name; for so the West Indians, if but preached unto, should be called. But they are called saints by qualification, that is, they are sanctified. 'They that were not my people shall be called my people,' Rom. ix. 25; 'called saints,' that is, that are saints; for God calls things as they are. They are 'called with an holy calling,' 2 Tim. i. 9. To all callings a qualification is required. If a man is to be of the privy council, the place requires that he should be wise; if he is to be of a company to trade, it is requisite that he be brought up to it; if he is a minister, that he be gifted; and so, if he be of a church, that he be holy.

4. It is a company joined to have fellowship with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 9. It is called therefore Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12, and *complementum Christi*, the fulness of Christ, Eph. i. 23.

The kingdom is spiritual, so are the subjects; for Christ is, in relation to his church, a King of saints, Rev. xv. 3. To be in a church is to be fellow-citizens with saints, Eph. ii. 19, and with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 9. And as reason only fits us to have fellowship with men, so grace only qualifies us to have communion with saints and Christ. A fellowship is of those who are alike in nature and disposition. Thus God would not have Adam joined in fellowship with beasts, and therefore made a woman for him, as a meet companion; much less will God admit his second Adam, Christ, and his members, to be joined with swine. 'What fellowship is there between righteousness and unrighteousness?' 2 Cor. vi. 14–17. They are a temple to God, and the stones which frame it are hewn before they are laid in the material building, 1 Kings xvii. 18; and therefore they are to be lively stones, not dead, as Peter alludes, 1 Peter ii. 5. They are a body, and the body of Christ, and therefore the members are to be similar to the head. Hence hath arisen that distinction of a church mystical and of a church instituted, which suppose the same matter, the same men, and which are but several adjuncts of the same matter or relations, whereof the one may be superadded to the other. As in Holland, the same man that is a member of the society of the states-general is also, and may be also, of the states of a particular town, but yet still he must be a Dutchman; or, as in London, every man of a particular company may also be a member of the common council of the whole city, but yet he must be a Londoner, and free of the city; so here in this case, if a person is a member of the church mystical, or of an instituted church, he ought to be a saint. As a church in general is a company and assembly of saints united, so the church mystical is the general assembly of all saints on earth united in Christ to him, and one to another. And the church instituted is a particular assembly of saints on earth, united in Christ by a special covenant. The members of both the one and the other are to be saints united into a company and assembly, that so there may be a communion.

1. I will shew the ground for this distinction of church in Scripture.

(1.) There one church is called 'the general assembly, and the church of the first-born,' Heb. xii. 23. An assembly it is, and a general assembly; and that part of the distinction argues there is another to be found, from which, by that word, it is distinguished; and therefore there are particular assemblies, which also must be called a church. Members of this general assembly these Hebrews were; for he saith, ver. 22, 'Ye are come to this general assembly,' as being made a part of it. And that these Hebrews were also members of particular assemblies, though dispersed through all countries, and that they had a relation unto them, is expressly mentioned, Heb. x. 3, 25, 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.' And they were so to assemble, as in a special relation joined, to consider and exhort one another.

Yea, more expressly we find this mentioned, 1 Cor. xii. 27, where, having discoursed of the whole body in the former verses, he (in ver. 27) draws down all he had said in the general of the whole church to that particular church at Corinth, to whom he writes, chap. i. 2, 'Now ye are the body of Christ' (says the apostle), 'and members in particular;' where the phrase, *in particular*, hath reference both to body as well as to members. So as the meaning is this, that they in particular made a body of Christ, and were members one of another, also in particular; and, therefore, all that he had

discoursed of the nature of the body, and the members, and the offices, and duties in general, he brings home as particularly true of them, as making a special body apart, so the word is ἐκ μέρους. They were a body apart in relation to other churches, and more particularly members one of another, and that in such a particular manner, as they were not so of any church else. The like we have as express, Eph. ii., where, having discoursed of the body mystical, as made up both of Jews and Gentiles, as appears by ver. 16, he shews (ver. 19) their relation thereunto: 'Ye are no more strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God' (namely, that great household of heaven and earth, as he calls it, chap. iii. 15), 'and are built,' &c.; ver. 20, 'with all saints into an holy temple.' And then he further adds, ver. 22, 'and you also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.' Where, 1, he means some one more special further temple than to be members of the mystical general building; for he had said before, ver. 19, 20, Ye are built up with the whole church into such a temple, and it needed not so emphatically be repeated again. But in that he says *you also*, καὶ, &c., he affirms some further thing of them than what he had said of them before. He means something more than that whereas the whole body is built into a temple, they are built with them as a part of that temple. For that he had said afore (ver. 19) they being part of that whole temple, of which he says all is built, &c., ver. 20–22, he makes them a distinct temple from the former, and plainly intends, that as with the whole they grew up into a temple, so they in particular were built up as an habitation besides the other. You Ephesians, and you as together considered (says he), συνοικοδομεῖσθε, 'are built up together.' So as he speaks it not of that personal relation and conjunction which they had with all the rest of the saints in the world, and which every one had privately and personally to the mystical church (for that was as common to the Galatians as to them), but he means that which they had together in a more peculiar manner in joint relation each to other. If he had designed only their common relation, he would rather have said, You, together with all saints, are thus built up; but this he had said afore. But now (says he) you Ephesians, together one with another, are built up into a more special house, or private oratory (as I may allude to private chapels in great cathedrals), or little sanctuary (as the prophet speaks, Ezek. xi. 16), private by themselves. I might prove the same out of Eph. iv., where, having first at large discoursed of the whole body on earth (ver. 12), he then passeth (ver. 16) to the use, and end, and benefit of a particular congregation, which he also calls a whole body fitly joined together, so as to supply nourishment, and to edify each other. Which of all the saints on earth, making up a mystical body, cannot be said; for how is every one so dispersed able to edify each other in love?

'And because there is the same reason every way of the body mystical, and of the body instituted, therefore the same privileges every way which appertain to the whole body mystical do belong also as fully to every such particular church, so as indeed they are one; that is, there is *unica et eadem ratio*, one and the same consideration of the one and the other, as there is the same nature of a drop that is of the ocean, since both are water, the one as well as the other. Therefore the apostles do so promiscuously speak the same things of the one and the other, and in their discourses pass, without much distinction, from the one to the other. As he that reads an anatomy of the body of man in general may be said to read it of every man in particular, so what is said of the invisible church may be said and applied to the visible. As the one is called the body of Christ, so is the other. Yea, as

the one is called the whole body of Christ, so is the other. So of the church of the Corinths he says, 'when the whole church is come together in one place.' For the church of Christ is *totum homogeneum*, an homogeneal whole, whose parts are of the same nature with itself; and so what is said of the whole is said of every part.

CHAPTER II.

The reasons why Christ hath instituted a congregational church.

I will now give reasons why Christ did institute such a particular ordinance as a particular congregation of members joined, to grow up to be a body, a temple apart unto Christ, and why he hath thus endowed them with the privileges, name, and nature of the whole.

1. That there should be joint and public profession of the name of God, and that God should be worshipped of his creatures, as assembled together, is exceeding necessary, and indeed natural. Though the manner of divine worship is instituted, yet that God should be worshipped by many (when many are extant, that may worship him) is as natural as that he is to be worshipped. Therefore all nations have ever had public assemblies in which to worship their gods. And therefore in Genesis, no sooner did that common work of mankind spread into branches, but it is upon the genealogy presently recorded, and put unto it, as the consequence of it: Gen. iv. 26. 'Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,' that is, publicly and together; for privately, they had done it afore: or if it be meant of idolatrous worship (as some interpret it), that the men began profanely to call on the name of the Lord, yet public it was. And however, that they thus fall upon it, argues the voice of nature, as it is, Micah iv. 5, and is argued from it. The people of God argue from it to provoke one another to public worship, of which he there speaks (ver. 1, 2), how in latter days, that is, under the gospel, there should be flowing to the mountain of the Lord, and all people should flow to it. 'And many nations shall say, Come, let us go up and assemble,' &c. He speaks in the language of the Old Testament to express the worship of the New. You know the temple stood upon a mountain, to which the church of the Jews resorted for public worship, so as to go up to the mountain of the Lord is to assemble together to worship. And how do they provoke one another to this? By the law of nature written in all men's hearts, ver. 5, 'For all people will walk in the name of his God,' that is, make a joint and public profession of him, and together call upon him; for to that he there exhorts, ver. 5. It is a natural instinct in the new creature, therefore they breathe after it.

2. As to have assemblies wherein to worship God is natural, so now, under the gospel, particular assemblies are necessary. When, indeed, the church was contracted in Judea, so as all the nation might at once meet, for greater solemnity God ordained three solemn meetings every year, and therefore they were a national church. But now, when the gospel was preached all the world over, and saints were to be gathered from over all the world, it was necessary that church assemblies should be instituted and set up everywhere. Thus Paul gives directions for public ordinances, that as now they might pray for all men, which the Jews might not do, so that God now would have all saved, 1 Tim. ii. 4–6, and therefore he was the apostle of the Gentiles; viii. 7, 'I will therefore' (it is an inference therefrom) 'that men pray everywhere,' he speaks of public assemblies, and the ordering them, as in the whole epistle. Therefore Judea itself, which was before a church national,

and they were to come to the temple to worship, now had many churches in it, Gal. i. 2; and therefore the prophets, speaking of the latter days, and prophesying of the church assemblies, then call them not an assembly only (as that of the Jews was called the great congregation), but assemblies. So Isa. iv. 5, he says, 'He will create upon every dwelling place of mount Sion, assemblies,' &c., not *assembly*, which yet should be all on mount Sion, and have the same privilege and promise that mount Sion had. So we have it expressed in Mal. i. 11, 'Incense shall be offered up everywhere;' and so the temple was to be everywhere.

For, 3, it cannot be imagined that Christ should not be as good to his church, in respect of dispensations of grace, under the gospel, as under the Old Testament. Therefore all the privileges that the Jews met together in the temple had, and all the ordinances wherein they jointly partook, and the like helps, and more full of grace, instead of those other, were to succeed in the New Testament; for his name, he says, should be as great among the heathens as ever among the Jews. Therefore Christ sets up a temple, and gives power to his church in all places to set up temples and habitations to himself, and endows all those private churches with all the privileges and endowments that the assembly of the Jews had; and hence now, every such assembly is called the Lord's mountain and his temple, and hence all the encomiums mentioned of the Jews' church are now given to two or three poor assembled. As he said of the temple, 'I will put my name there' (Deut. xii. 11, 1 Kings viii. 29); so now Christ's word is (Mat. xviii. 19, 20), 'I say to you, that where two or three are gathered together, I will be in the midst of them.' Which words, as Cameron notes, are not assertory only, but institutive; yea, I say further, look what privileges and what ordinances all saints on earth, if assembled together, should partake of, the same as fully and entirely hath Christ appointed two or three assembling in his name to partake in, till they all meet together in heaven.

4. It was for Christ's honour that it should be thus, that such spiritual regiments and commonwealths, and bodies of saints, should be erected, to shew that Christ is king. For Christ is a king, and must rule amongst the midst of his enemies, Ps. cx., Rev. xv. 3. He reigns over wicked men by his providence; but as he is peculiarly king of saints, Rev. xv. 3, so in and over his saints peculiarly, and that not in their hearts only, but outwardly and visibly, in an ordered instituted kingdom and body. He is king not only in having saints, but in having saints ordered and embodied together in holy societies: Col. ii. 2, 'I rejoice to behold your order.' He is a king over the bodies of his saints, as well as their souls, 1 Cor. vi. 20, for he redeemed both. And, therefore, as his work is to guide their souls inwardly by his Spirit, so their outward man by his officers and ordinances appointed. An instituted church is called his kingdom, Mat. xxi. 43, for he says, that kingdom shall be taken away; he means ordinances, and the candlestick of the church. And it is reason, that his kingly office should be extended as large as his prophetical and priestly. His prophetical reacheth to outward things, to baptism, and the Lord's supper, &c. His priestly office was performed externally afore the world, and so he was to the Jews in outward things 'Jesus Christ, the same to-day that yesterday,' Heb. xiii. 8. The kingdom then answerably is visible in an external administration. Christ was to have an house under the New Testament, as under the Old, Heb. x. 21. We have an high priest over the house of God, and thereupon he urgeth assembling together, ver. 25, which makes Christ an house. Now if we are not to forsake the assemblies, it is then our duty to begin to form them, and it is remarkable that he says *assembling*, not *assemblies* only.

5. By the institution of these particular churches Christ sets up a kingdom, and judgeth aforehand. He judgeth them within, by casting them out if offenders, which shews that he will not bear with scandals; and he judgeth also those without, in denying to admit them, and so separates between the precious and the vile, and makes a day of judgment aforehand. Therefore we find it made, by the prophets, the fruit of these assemblies, that Christ judgeth amongst the nations, Isa. ii. 3, 4, Micah v. 2, 3; and another fruit is, that they are blessed, as means to convert souls, Acts ix. 31.

6. Saints have as much need now of assembling thus as then. Adam had need of fellowship in innocency, and much more do we need it in a state of corruption. Therefore the apostle exhorts upon that ground to these assemblies, Heb. x. 25.

CHAPTER III.

A comparison between the church mystical, universal, and an instituted particular church.—Wherein they both agree, and in what respects there is a difference between the one and the other.—The definition of a congregational church.

Since there is like reason for the universal mystical church, and particular churches, and since every particular church hath the resemblance, name, privileges, and attributes of the general, and all that it hath is modificated by a special institution, let us therefore compare a little the one with the other, by which we shall the more clearly see the true notion and nature of an instituted church, by seeing both what is common to both, and wherein the one is modificated and differs from the other.

A church instituted is a company as well as the other, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, for the ordinances of it are a communion, ver. 16. 'And we being many, are one body, and partakers of that one bread,' ver. 17. There is only this difference, that an instituted church is but of as many as come together in one place, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 'When the whole church is come together in one place;' mark that, he calls that the whole church, which yet was but those saints at Corinth, 1 Cor. xi. 20; when you come together in one, not with one mind only, but in one place. But that other mystical church is the company of saints all the world over. And the reason why God did contract this instituted church to such a number as could meet in one place, was because the end of that institution and meeting was full communion and entire, such as that they who meet should partake in all ordinances together with one accord, as Acts ii. 46; and then nature doth teach that it can be but such a company, and so many as can all hear and edify one another, &c., and who may, from the same pastor, receive the Holy Ghost, and the same provocation of grace at the same time; and who may 'glorify God with one mouth and one mind,' Rom. xv. 6, and 'serve him with one shoulder,' Zech. iii. 6. And therefore in that institution of a church, Mat. xviii., he mentions their agreement. It is agreement as met together, which is essential to every ordinance: 'If two shall agree,' saith our Saviour, Mat. xviii. 19. The word is *συμφωνήσωσιν*, that is, make up a consort, an harmony; for ordinances and prayer are so to God, Eph. v. 19. And therefore, 1 Cor. x. 16, though he says many made that one body at Corinth, yet they were but so many as could be partakers of that one bread, and receive the sacrament together, and as many as might all learn, when they prophesied one by one, 1 Cor. xiv. 31. And so at Ephesus (Acts xx. 28), the elders were to take care of all the flock; therefore such a flock is to be no more than such as a pastor can take the

care of. And therefore, in those countries and regions where the saints did multiply, their churches were multiplied also, as in Galatia there were the churches of Galatia, 1 Cor. xvi. 1; and so in Asia too, Rev. i. 4, 20, Acts xviii. 41. But the mystical church is the assembly of all saints, it is 'the whole family both in heaven and earth,' Eph. iii. 15, which, like the sea, is too vast in this world to be gathered into one place.

2. As the church mystical is a company of saints, so is the church instituted also to be. So was the church of Corinth: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'To the church at Corinth, called to be saints.' And it is a company of such as are elect: so 1 Pet. v. 13. The church which was at Babylon, is said to be 'elect together with them;' that particular church was such. Thus Paul testifies of that instituted church at Philippi, Philip. i. 1, calling them the saints there, with the bishops and deacons; and inasmuch as he mentions officers, he speaks of them as of an instituted church. And this he says, not speaking of the better part, as giving the denomination to the whole, but as of every one amongst them; ver. 6, 'being confident in this, that you have a good work in you.' And he expresseth that it was meet to think so of them all, ver. 7, else they all had not been meet to have been of the church. The like is spoken of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 2, and 1 Thes. v. 5; and there is a world of reason for it.

1. For to all callings there is to be a qualification.

2. Because these are to make up a body to Christ, as well as the mystical, therefore they must be answerable to their head. It would be very unsuitable,

Humano capiti cervicem jungere equinam,

to join monstrous members to such a glorious head. They who are joined to Christ must not be members of an harlot.

3. These are called to fellowship with Christ and his saints. And as moral virtues fit persons to have communion with men, so grace only qualifies men to have communion with Christ and saints.

4. Their fellowship, and meetings, and transactions, are to be with one accord, Acts iv. 32, and with one heart. Now faith will give them that. The believers met with one mind, Acts iv. 32; and they only can and will do so. There is to be an agreement, an harmony, *συμφωνία*, in a church, and one false string makes a discord. There must be agreeing in principles to fit men for church fellowship; and as men that agree in the fundamental laws of a kingdom, are only fit to be subjects in that kingdom, so those only are fit to be subjects of this spiritual kingdom, that agree in acknowledgment of the fundamental principles of godliness, which only true faith will enable a man to do, Titus i. 1, Philem. 6. Therefore, those who deny the power of godliness are not to be received, but we are to turn away from them, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Nay, such a mixture will cause apparent variance, so Christ says, Mat. x. 34, 35. For such persons are contrary, and led by contrary principles, and how then can they be joined in such fellowship, as is the most near communion with Christ?

5. The ends of church fellowship are the form of it (as I shall shew anon). Now, therefore, such matter is only to be taken in, as may comply and be serviceable to those ends. Christ, when he makes any institution to an end, makes it such as may attain that end, or else it is in vain, and so not an ordinance. Now wicked men are no more fit matter, nor no more capable of the spiritual ends of a congregation, than the body of a beast is fit for a reasonable soul to dwell in, and inform, and to use to actions reasonable. For the ends of this body of a church, and of this holy society, and of every member of it, is to edify one another, and every part is to supply grace to

it, Eph. iv. 16. And for that men must have received the Spirit, and some spiritual gift. Therefore, those who have not the Spirit of Christ, and have no spiritual gifts and graces, have but the spirit of this world, and are unfit, and will be so far from edifying the church, that (as Solomon says, Eccles. ix. 18) 'One sinner will destroy much good.' And are such persons also fit to reprove, to judge, and thereby to preserve the church pure? Since they are such whom Christ calls swine, they are so unfit to reprove, as they are not fit to be reproved, Matt. vii. 6. And it is of such the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ii. 14, that they cannot receive things spiritual, but they are foolishness unto them, and therefore they are unfit to judge those within, for the spiritual man only judgeth all things, and is judged of none, 1 Cor. ii. 14. How many men are of Gallio's temper; if it be a matter of right or wrong, that is to be judged of in the commonwealth, they can do it; but if the matter is about the spiritualness of the law or gospel (which things are within the proper cognisance of this church court), they care for no such matter; or if they judge, they will certainly cast out their brethren, Isa. lxvi. 5, and say, God be glorified, when they have done.

So then as well an instituted church as the mystical is to consist only of saints, and saints are to be the matter of both; only *de facto*, indeed, there sometimes falls out this difference.

1. That the mystical church being immediately called by God, consists of those only, whom, as the apostle says, 'The Lord approves and judges such,' 2 Cor. x. 18, without the judgment of men coming between, who are Jews inwardly, and whose religion is that of the heart, and whose praise is not of men but of God, Rom. ii. 29. But this instituted church, though immediately ordained to be of God and according to his laws, yet the gathering of it, and assembling of it, is an act of man's (namely, of saints), and therefore, Heb. x. 25, it is called the assembling themselves together. And such is the calling and appointing of ministers, whose calling, though it be of God's institution, yet the designment, who should be a minister, is immediately by men. And, therefore, so the apostle distinguisheth his immediate call from that of other ministers, Gal. i. 1, that it was not by men but by Christ. Hence, therefore, because what persons should be of this or that congregation, is determined by the judgment of a company of men that are spiritual, whom in these things God hath left supreme judges on earth: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The spiritual man judgeth all things,' &c. And because they in judging are, and may be often deceived, hence *de facto* it comes to pass, that in great congregations there may be some found that prove hypocrites. Thus the apostles tells them, Acts xx. 30, that in Ephesus, 'men of themselves should arise, teaching perverse things,' though in the institution and choice of members never so great care was had. But still, though these saints may be deceived in the application of the rule, yet they are to hold fast the rule itself, that saints only are fit matter for a church, and that such only are to be admitted, though they who have the power of receiving them are often mistaken; yea, though temporary believers may be found in the church without a wedding garment, yet to them in the church they are as saints, and justified as such, being not known to be otherwise. So as though before God, and as to his knowledge, others than saints may be in a church, yet none but such as are to us and in our judgments saints and holy, and of whom (as the apostle says, Philip. i. 6, 7) it is meet for us to think they have a work wrought, knowing their election, 1 Thes. i. 5, are to be admitted by us into church fellowship. By us there are none to be admitted, but such as to us are saints. So then to us a church instituted is all holy, and justified, and elected, and sanctified.

2. And hence also this further difference between the matter of the one and the other ariseth, that those who are saints invisible to men, or inwardly such, and who yet are visibly such to God's eye, are the matter of the mystical church; but such as are visible saints to men, not to wicked men (for they are blind, and judge not of colours), but visible to them who are appointed judges, which are the saints, who, as they only have a right to ordinances, so to judge, 1. Cor. ii. 15, are the matter of the instituted church. So that as true faith before God is the form of the members of the invisible church, so a true profession of faith outwardly is essential to make fit matter capable of being framed into an instituted church. And as that is ordained to be an external visible body, so a visible true faith is necessary in the members of it, and therefore it is called the household of faith, Acts iv. 23. Now it is not he that saith he hath faith, James ii. 14, in a verbal profession, that is outwardly, a visible believer, but saith James, 'Shew me thy faith by thy works,' ver. 18. Faith is called therefore, 2 Cor. ix. 13, a professed subjection to the gospel, but it must be a faith that is effectual to the acknowledging of such truths as are after godliness, Titus i. 1, Philemon 6, and so effectual as to prevail in others that are saints to acknowledge every good thing in them, Philemon 6, and such as it may cause them that are saints to think it meet so to judge of them, Philip. i. 16, and such as hath the obedience of faith to attend to it, Rom. xv., and such as hath a professed subjection to the gospel in the whole man, for it is to be such as is no lie. Now to profess in words and deny in deeds is the greatest lie that is, 1 John i. 6, and liars are to be without, Rev. xxii. 15.

3. As the church mystical is a company knit and united together into one body to fellowship with Christ, and one with another by the Spirit, so also is a church instituted to be.

(1.) It is to be a company knit and united together, for they, though many, are called one body, 1 Cor. xiii. 20, and Ephes. iv. 16, joined together and compacted, and, Ephes. ii. 22, they are builded together for an habitation for God, a distinct habitation by themselves (those places speak all of an instituted church); yea, and so in particular united, as to make a distinct entire body unto Christ from all other churches, as those Ephesians, Ephes. ii. 22, did, and the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xii. 27. Thus the apostle speaks likewise, Rom. xii. 4, 'We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' And he speaks it in relation to an instituted church, for, vers. 6–8, he reckons up the offices and organs of such a body ('He that teacheth on teaching,' &c.), and therefore he intimates them to be in such a particular manner members one to another as to none else; and to be joined into such a body, as that they have power, by virtue of such a conjunction, to judge one another that are within the body, 1 Cor. v. 12, and to put out from among them, ver. 13; which power they have not over other saints, or any saints in the world, but only over such as were by some special means made of them and of their body, and therefore distinctly formed as into a distinct commonwealth. And it is a body not confused but ordered, according to several gifts, to several functions, 1 Cor. xii. So the apostle saith of the Colossians, that he rejoiced beholding their order, Col. ii. 5; so he tells the Ephesians, that they were a body,' not only joined together, but fitly joined together, Ephes. iv. 16.

(2.) It is to be a company united by the Spirit. So the church of the Ephesians was 'built together by the Spirit into an habitation,' Ephes. ii. 22, and those other places are to be understood of both: Ephes. iv. 4, 'There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called,' &c.; that is, this is exemplified in you, who by one Spirit have been called into one body, as into

an hope of calling; and, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, being made all to drink into one Spirit.'

(3.) It is a company joined to have fellowship with Christ. Such was the church of the Corinthians, to whom he writes as to a particular church, 1 Cor. i. 2, and who are said to be 'called to fellowship with Christ,' ver. 9; such were the Philippians, who were an instituted church, Philip. i. 1, 2, and they are said to 'have fellowship in the gospel from the first day,' ver. 5.

These things are common to both the church mystical and instituted; but there are these differences between the one and the other.

1. In their knitting together and union there is a difference. The union of the whole church mystical is internal, and simply by the communication of the Spirit, and by the communion of the same faith and love, having the same Spirit in them that dwells in Christ and all his members; and having the same faith ('like precious faith,' 2 Peter i. 1), which is called the communion of faith; and being interested in the same benefits, in the same 'common salvation,' as Jude calls it, Jude 3, and in the same common Lord, 1 Cor. i. 2, 'with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.' But the union of an instituted church (though it contains and supposeth all this in the matter of it), as it is more special, particular, and distinct, so it is founded upon something more peculiar; and as the government of it is external, so the union of it is also. As, 1, is seen by gathering together in one place, in the name of Christ: Acts ii. 44, 'All that believed were together,' and Mat. xviii. 20, 'Where two or three are gathered together,' &c. When the law was given, and that church of the Jews was to be constituted, the people were all assembled to meet God. Thus it is under the gospel, too; 'when ye come together,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. As coming together and cohabitation is necessary to a married condition, so it is to this; though indeed it do not cease to be a church if dispersed, or any member to be a member if severed a while; but their union being in relation to gathering together, it may continue, as man and wife may be man and wife still though for a season they are asunder, but yet their relation was ordained to be by coming together (1 Cor. vii. 5); and therefore, if either voluntarily will depart the other part is free, ver. 15. And because this church relation is ordained for coming together, therefore if any forsake the assembling together, it doth unchurch them, Heb. x. 25.

And whereas their gathering is in the name of Christ, it is meant to be either in the authority of Christ, as was said, or further also for the name of Christ, for so ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι is taken. This Christ says, Mat. xi. 6, 'Blessed is he that is not offended in me;' that is, 'for me.' So we are said to exalt the name of Christ in his ordinances, and every ordinance is Christ's name, &c. This being gathered in Christ's name, is the end of this holy company, which distinguisheth it from all societies else; for *finis in moralibus idem quod forma in naturalibus*, the end of moral things is the same as the form in naturals. As a company of students meeting together at public acts, &c., makes a college, a company of men assembling to consult are called the council; so a company of saints met not to any other purpose, as to eat, &c. (for then they make not a church, 1 Cor. xi. 20–22, 'Have you not houses to eat in?' &c.), but in the name of Christ, and to call upon his name, are a church; for that end put upon the meeting must go to make a church.

They are to be united together, to a constant gathering together. It is not every sudden meeting that makes a church, as to pray, fast, &c., for they are to be compact together, Ephes. iv. 16; it is an united company of

brethren, that must 'dwell together in unity,' Ps. cxxxiii. 1. Jerusalem, the type of our assemblies, was a city compact, Ps. cxxii. 31. The first church (as it is called, Acts ii. 47) continued in the apostles' fellowship, and that stedfast, Acts ii. 42, 46, for otherwise it could not make a distinct body unto Christ, as the Ephesians did, Ephes. ii. 22. They were made an habitation unto God, alluding to the temple, which was called the house of God, and was a settled thing. And the word εἰς κατοικητήριον is observable to this purpose (as it is by Beza), for κατοικεῖν and παροικεῖν differ, as *habitare* and *commorare*, to dwell and to abide, *natura domicilium nobis non habitandi sed commorandi dedit*, as Tully says. A church is an abiding place, not a tent for a night; and in that he says they were not only an habitation, but that they dwelt together, εἰς, &c., κατοικητήριον, to be an habitation, the phrase implies constantly. And surely that which settleth any commonwealth into a body must fix this sacred company. A company meeting at several fairs or marts, never make a body or incorporation, because they are fluid and part again; but constant assembling and unity makes a society, and inasmuch as it is a body compacted to edify itself, it implies constancy. For if members should be disjointed, and some members make up the body the one day, others another, there would be little supply of nourishment, for the nourishment is from what every joint supplies.

And therefore, to fix them, it is meet and requisite they be joined by a special covenant, which may make and express a more special relation. For indeed, as the relation which faith internal works between us and Christ, is the form of the church mystical, so the special relation to Christ and to one another, to enjoy all Christ's ordinances, goes to make up the form of the church instituted. This relation, a covenant formally and expressly works, and constant meeting with such an intention really and virtually makes. And therefore not saints scattered, though living and meeting in one place, makes a church, Acts xix. 1; Apollos is said to find disciples at Corinth, but not a church.

The tabernacle, the type of this gospel church, was knit together by taches, Exod. xxvi. 6, which, Acts xv. 16, is made by James the type of building up the church of Christ for worship under the New Testament. And if no mention had been made of any such thing, yet the nature of the thing implies it; for a scattered people, that assemble not out of an obligation, cannot be supposed to have power each over other. Hence, also, we find in Scripture, that the apostles, writing to particular churches, speak of such as were members in covenant with them in a phrase of propriety and special relation. So says the apostle of Epaphras, Col. iv. 2, 'who is one of you,' in special relation. And there was a stipulated subjection to Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 13, as indeed all societies are knit by outward agreement.

2. As the saints are joined into one body, so, as occasion is, into a body ordered, not confused. For God in the church is not the author of confusion, but peace. It is to be a kingdom, a commonwealth of Israel, a body politic, not civilly politic, but spiritually; an army with banners, in which are several stations, ranks, laws, and constitutions. Therefore, Col. ii. 5, he rejoiceth, as in their faith as Christians, so in their order, by which things were ordered in their church among them. Which order may note out,

(1.) An enjoyment of all ordinances instituted by Christ, according to Christ's laws. So when the apostle had rectified their abuses, and brought them to the primitive true institution of the sacrament (1 Cor. xi. 23, 'That I received of the Lord I delivered to you'), he calls this a setting things in order among them, 'the rest I will set in order when I come,' ver. 34. All which ordinances, when rightly and duly administered, he calleth (ver. 2)

traditions or ordinances, as he delivered them. Whereof the one was the right administration of the Lord's Supper, ver. 23. Which I think were called traditions, not that they were unwritten, as the papists assert, but because they were new institutions, which came in the room of the Jewish ordinances and form of government, and which were merely institutions *de novo*, received from Christ, and delivered only to them, as ver. 25 implies, and not to be found formerly commanded in the writings of the prophets.

(2.) The order of a gospel church imports the ranking and ordering all their members into such proper offices, according to their gifts, that all those ordinances might be enjoyed, and all gifts among them, to the utmost, be improved to the use of the whole. As therefore it is called a body, for the identity of members in nature, which are made for substance of the same flesh and nature (for all saints are flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone, as we say of those that are alike and akin), and of the same graces, so also it is a body joined (Eph. iv. 16) for union and unity, and not only so, but fitly joined. It is not only rightly joined, but fitly placed and disposed according to the gifts of every member. It is fitly joined, not for the ornament and beauty only of the whole, but for the use and supplying true nourishment to the whole; which we shall find to be that which, under the similitude of a body, the apostle doth much insist on, Rom. xii. 4–6, 1 Cor. xii.

(3.) In a body there are not only many members, as was observed, and so in a church; but, 2, these members are of several sizes and measures of gifts and graces, Eph. iv. 16. There is a proportion in every part, which, according to its measure, supplies nourishment to the whole, which the apostle calls, Rom. xii. 6, the proportion of faith received by each. And, 3, these gifts are diverse, 1 Cor. xii. 4; there are diversity of gifts, as are in the members of the body. The hand is gifted and fitted to do something which the eye is not, &c.: 1 Cor. xii. 15, 'The hand is not the foot,' &c., that is, serves not for that use the hand doth. Which diversity of gifts, or fitness for use to the whole, ariseth partly out of the several institutions and ordering of graces. All the members for substance consist of the same similar parts, flesh, blood, veins, nerves, arteries, bones, which are alike in the hand and foot, but being variously ordered and tempered (as the apostle's word is, ver. 24, συνεκέρασε), in one there being more of nerves, in another more of flesh; in some there being one grace more eminent, as love, pity, &c., in others knowledge, &c.; accordingly doth there arise a several gift out of the various composition and temperament of the same graces. They also arise from superadded habits infused by the Spirit, as in the primitive church the extraordinary gifts wholly did, vers. 9, 10. And now these ordinary gifts (that one should have his understanding furnished more for words of knowledge to teach churches, another for words of wisdom to apply them wisely, ver. 8), are from a several infused habit, put in by the Spirit over and above their grace.

(4.) As their gifts are diverse, so the offices, and administrations, and ordinances in the church are diverse, and the one are suited to the other, there being no gift but an office is appointed to exercise it; and an ordinance also is instituted, unto which both these gifts and offices serve. This we find in Rom. xii. 4, that all members, as they have not the same gifts, so nor the same office; and in 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, that as there are diversities of gifts, so of administrations, that is, offices or ministries, as the word signifies, to exercise them in. And the operations of these ordinances, and success by those ordinances, are answerable in the hearts of the rest. And all these are fitted to all the needs in the church: ver. 21, 'The eye cannot say to

the foot, I have no need of you;' not so much as a little finger can be wanting.

(5.) As the whole church hath need of the right placing and disposing of all these members to those several offices, for the enjoying all those ordinances, so Christ hath appointed it. This is the order of the whole, and makes it a body, when the hand stands not where the eye should, nor the foot where the hand should; which disposure the apostle (ver. 24) called setting diverse officers in the church, or fitly ordering them. And therefore to this day, the putting or ordaining of any to the ministry is called giving and taking orders.

In this doth this instituted body differ from that mystical; that though, when all the scattered members of that mystical body shall come all together at latter day, there will be a differing measure of grace and glory (which, Eph. iv. 14, the apostle calls the measure of the stature of every member), which, put together, makes up Christ's fulness, and each person a perfect man in his body mystical, all having their several yet full stature; yet then, because there shall be a perfect unity in faith and knowledge, as there shall be no need of ordinances (God being all in all, and the Lamb the light of them, and so no temple there, Rev. xxi. 23), so nor of variety of gifts and offices, which in this instituted body are found, till we all come to the unity, &c., and no longer, ver. 13.

We may then take this for a sure rule, in reading the epistles of the apostles, that where we find the body of Christ with members, and varieties of gifts and offices, and executions of offices spoken of, there this instituted body of Christ is only and principally meant.

The church mystical, and the particular churches instituted, agree in this, that both of them are ordained, that in them we might have a fellowship with Christ, and one with another; so, Philip. i. 5, it is called 'fellowship in the gospel.' And in the instituted church there are the same ordinances that are in the mystical, only there are some ordinances in this that are not in the other, so as it differs from it in some ways and means of fellowship. In the mystical church the members have fellowship with Christ, by duties of the first command, especially private prayer, &c., but in an instituted church they have communion with him by duties of the second command, that as the church itself is an ordinance, so the means of fellowship in it are ordinances external also. Christ here communicates himself by public gifts and dispensations, by the offices of teachers, pastors, elders, and by sacraments, and by excommunication, &c., and so by these ways too the members have fellowship one with another. By ordinances of the mystical church, as the members have common faith, so in immediate fruits of it, they have and may have a communion, as to love, and shew effects of it by relieving, reproving, &c. For if there be a communion of their persons, then also of their graces, Philem. 6, Titus i. 4. If they have a communion as of one Christian friend with another, then in offices of friendship too. Thus, having the same Spirit of faith, they may build one another in faith by speech: Ps. cxvi. 10, 'I believed, therefore speak.' They have the same spirit of prayer, and therefore may pray in the Holy Ghost, may say 'Our Father,' and so likewise out of love may relieve one another. But in a church instituted there is this difference:

1. Though that these things are all taken in, yet they are made constant set duties, not to be omitted. To others they are but occasional, though by a special obligation thus they are bound to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith; and so to love all, and to pray for all saints as occasion is; but these joined in church fellowship are especially, setly, and

ex officio, by office engaged in these duties: as to talk holily every day, but setly on the Sabbath day. Therefore exhortation to these common duties comes in after a church is supposed to be instituted; so Rom. xii. 9–11, Heb. x. 23–25.

2. These common duties are taken in here as ordinances, and so have a superadded relation put upon them, so as they have the nature of an ordinance. Thus, Mat. xviii. 15, private admonition is made an ordinance, and therefore comes in after and upon the institution of such a church fellowship, Heb. x. 23–25.

3. In a church instituted, there are ordinances in which the mystical church out of such a state cannot at all partake. There is the sacrament, which is a 'communion of many made one body,' 1 Cor. x. 17; and there is excommunication, which supposeth a body; and a fellowship engaging each other, and having power to judge them within itself. Thus likewise there are offices in an instituted congregational church which are not in the universal mystical church. The Jews had public feasts and ordinances, not to be used out of the holy mountain, and a great assembly, Lev. iv. 4, Deut. xii. 5, 6, 14, which was not to meet out of it, Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27; and this was a type of gospel assemblies, Heb. x. 25, Isa. ii. 2–4. As private performances are not accepted until a man is a member of the mystical body, so nor these till a man is joined in the instituted body. As ministers are set in the church, 1 Cor. xii. 28, so are these ordinances too.

4. In an instituted congregational church, there is a further blessing on all duties. We pray in private, but in the temple more acceptably; we reprove a brother, but in a church way more acceptably. There may be a preaching out of season, but in the church it is in season; as sermons on week-days bless, but on the Sabbath give a special blessing, redoubled from the consideration of the day and of the duty, so it is here in this case: Ps. cxxxiii. 3, 'The Lord hath commanded a blessing.'

Thus, one end of a church is that a man therein may enjoy further fellowship, and more ways of communion, than out of it. There is a threefold fellowship:

1. Personal, in secret duties; so John in Patmos had fellowship with Father, Son, &c., 1 John i. 3.

2. There is a mystical fellowship common to all saints.

3. There is a communion of saints in an instituted church, which takes in all that is in the other, and some things besides. This was typified out in the Jews, who had private communion in their synagogues, as they had a public communion in their national worship.

Another end of communion of saints in a particular church is to edify one another in faith and love, which is the end of all gifts, ordinances, and of the institution of a church itself, Eph. iv. 16, and Col. ii. 19. The whole body being thus fitly knit by what every joint, and calling, and member supplies in every part, doth the whole in every part increase to the edifying of itself in love. For this end also the several gifts and offices do serve, ver. 12, pastors, teachers, &c., for the edifying of the body of Christ. It is not only πρὸς καταρτίσμον, which we translate *perfecting*, but it may signify the jointing in of members, so as it includes conversion, and the bringing men into the body which are scattered from it; and the engrafting and jointing them into the body of Christ, and the excellency of gifts is to be measured by it, 1 Cor. xiv. 12, but also 'for edifying the saints.' Now, to have the church edified is as much, and of as much moment and necessity, as to have the saints converted at first; for there is a fulness of stature appointed, and every member must grow up unto it before it goes to heaven; for when all meet, every member must have a due proportion in the whole. And therefore Christ

says, Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted;' *i. e.* except ye be further converted, ye disciples already converted, ye cannot be saved. Now, for this edifying every part, doth this ordinance of a church and of the offices in it serve. And the reason why among us the ministry serves to conversion more than building up, and the gifts are more to work on wicked men than to build up godly men, is that we want this ordinance of a right constitution of churches, and of the ordinances and officers thereof, whereas yet it is of as much consequence as the other. For as by conversion the church is increased *extensively* in persons, so in the other *intensively* in graces. And to this end should all exercises in church assemblies, and other meetings of particular members of it in private, tend: 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 'Let all things be done to edification;' ver. 31, 'That all may learn, and all may be comforted.' And so in private meetings of the same body, they should provoke to love and good works, Heb. x. 24, and to have the church edified.

And to conclude this, thus hath God ordained, that till the whole body meet together, with every member grown up to its full stature (when they shall grow no more, and need no more edifying, being come to its full growth), these particular bodies should serve to increase them, and to fit them for that general assembly against the time that they then meet, when this imperfect church, and all the gifts and ordinances of it, shall be swallowed up in that general church, as rivers are when they fall into the sea, and then all this which is imperfect shall be done away.

This communion of saints in a particular church is further designed to the glory of God through Christ, which is the end of all; so gathering together in his name may be understood. Which may mean *for his name* (as was observed), so 2 Chron. xx. 8, 'Thou hast built a sanctuary for thy name.' He would put his name there; and his name was great, great there, Ps. lxxvi. 1; Eph. iii. 21, 'Unto him be glory in the church through Christ.' And though all his works praise him, yet his saints bless him, Ps. cxlv. 10. And they speak of the glory of his kingdom, and of the glory of his power, ver. 11. And where but in the assembly of the saints? 'Praise waiteth for thee in Zion,' Ps. lxv. 1; that is, in the church, where the sound of praises echo again, and resound in every heart, and multiply, and is made more glorious; therefore, says he, Ps. xxxv. 18, 'I will give thanks in the great congregation: and I will praise thee in the presence of much people;' for that is the most proper place of praise, and of making his name glorious.

This fellowship of saints in a church is all 'through the Spirit,' Eph. ii. 22, 'built through the Spirit.' 1, It is the Spirit makes them saints, and so fit matter for this building; 2, it is the Spirit, and not man, that makes them willing, and moves their hearts to join in this ordinance; 3, it is the Spirit that gives all the gifts that are in the members; 4, it is the Spirit that is that energy (as the word is, Eph. iv. 16) through which every part supplies nourishment to others.

The definition of a true gospel church will result out of the recollection of all these fore-mentioned parts together. It is a company of saints assembling together in one place, built by a special covenant into one distinct body, which, as occasion is, is to be fitly ordered to enjoy constant fellowship with Christ in all his way and ordinances, to their own mutual edification, and the glory of God through the Spirit. And the causes of it may severally and apart be considered as included all in this definition.

1. The true, and only true matter of this church, is saints visibly obeying Christ; and a true profession of this is the only true adequate note of the matter of it.

2. The special relation which they have to Christ, and one to another in

this way, and the fellowship with Christ and with one another, is the true form of a church. The mutual agreement works that special relation, and is the instrument of conjoining this matter and form.

3. The order and right administration of the ordinances and disposing of members is the *forma externa*, the external form of this body; the blessed Spirit, that acts and breathes in all, is the *forma assistens*, the assistant form; and their own edification and God's glory, through Christ their head, is the final cause of this particular visible instituted church.

CHAPTER IV.

That Jesus Christ hath given liberty and power to his saints to embody themselves into congregational churches.—That in doing so, they are not guilty of sinful separation or schism.

We have seen that a particular church is the institution of Christ, and what this church is, and of whom to be made up, and how. There yet remains to shew the rise, original of such churches, and to clear it out; and by whom any such churches are to be reared, erected, and begun, and set up; and in whom the power and authority lies to begin and build, and gather together saints into such a church. Which we must consider, for otherwise, though the thing done is lawful and warrantable, and is God's ordinance, yet we may still be asked (as they asked Christ), By what authority do ye these things?

For the building of the temple, it was not only necessary that a command and institution could be produced that such an house was to be built, which though Moses gave express warrant for, but yet this was not warrant enough for every one to begin to build it; no, not for David, for though he was the king of Israel, and so had the supreme power in the commonwealth, &c., committed to him, yet it was beyond his commission to attempt the building it, till he should have a special commission from God to do it, as God tells him, 2 Sam. vii. 5-9. He indeed provided materials, and gave the platform; but Solomon was only to build it, ver. 13. As therefore we are to look to a word of institution, that it be done, and to a right pattern and model, how it be done, and to right materials, of whom this house be built; so as much also to the true and lawful power, by which it is to be put in execution, and by whom it may be built; for as the apostle to the Hebrews tells us, Heb. iii. 4, 'Every house is built by some man,' so this house must have a lawful builder.

All assemblies (as at first I intimated) must be convened by lawful authority, and so must this. Now, though it is warranted to be set up in Christ's immediate institution, yet the setting of it up is done by men, whom Christ authoriseth to do it. He reareth it not, as he doth our house in heaven, without hands, 2 Cor. v. 1, but his temple here below, as that of Solomon's, is made with hands, and the rearing of it runs through the hands of some as the builders of it.

Now there are that pretend to have this power, as of governing, so only of beginning and giving warrant to saints to make churches, who yet will be found to prove in this such builders as the pharisees, who refused the head stone, and neither build truly themselves, according to the pattern, nor will suffer others; and they are such magistrates and such church governors, who would call in all church patents, not erected by themselves, with a *quo warranto*.

This power must certainly lie somewhere, else it were an institution in vain, which could never be produced into act. Now this is that which I am about to demonstrate, that as the saints and members of Christ's mystical are only fit matter for this church, so they have an immediate independent power and authority from Jesus Christ, their immediate head and king, to gather and combine themselves in such an assembly, without expecting warrant from any governors whatever on earth. I shall first explain, and then prove it.

1. Ministers make not a church, nor are they or their power requisite to the first gathering of it. The ministers or church governors, even those that begat to Christ, have not this power of casting us into churches, and disposing us herein. So far as they had a hand in begetting us, so far they may have a hand in it, that is, by directing us to it, and exhorting us unto it; but the power is in ourselves immediately. And there is this reason why the power of gathering churches is not dependent on them, because they are to be set in churches, 1 Cor. xii. 28, Acts xiv. 23. There were churches gathered, ere elders were made in them. And then besides, if such a power was resident in the ministers, then when they die, a congregation should cease to be a church. We are not then to await the leave of church governors for the gathering of a church.

2. Two or three saints have an immediate power from Christ to begin this fellowship.

(1.) It is so in Christ's institution, Mat. xviii. 20. The writ or commission for it runs immediately and singly in his name, not in the king's, nor in the minister's, &c., because his power and authority is warrant enough. Neither is it the meaning only, that when so gathered they should do all in his name, but even to gather themselves into a church is in his name. For if the very gathering together be an ordinance of itself, to frame a church thereby, then there is the same reason of it that there is of all other ordinances. And therefore as, when gathered, they have power in his name to excommunicate in his name, 1 Cor. v. 4, and to baptize in his name, &c., so to gather in his name too. And as a magistrate hath not power to forbid those ordinances to be administered, so not to hinder this other. For if gathering together itself be an ordinance, as it is, it therefore hath his name put to it, as well as the rest; and they have not power to intermeddle in it, nor is their power to be required for the one more than for the other. And besides, Christ's bidding saints to gather in his name, is as if the king should in a commission say to such and such, When ye are gathered together in my name, do thus, which implies, that he gives them power in his name to meet.

(2.) As Christ did thus immediately in his name ordain it, so the apostles taught the disciples to practise it as immediately from Christ, without expecting leave from magistrates or any other; and what they taught them to do, we may do to the end of the world. And there is the same reason for doing it under magistrates Christian as heathen; for the power is but the same. The apostles bade them not forsake assembling themselves, Heb. x. 25. He speaks not only to particular persons not to leave the assemblies, but to the whole churches of the Jews, not to forsake church assemblings, not to break up their meetings, notwithstanding they were persecuted, ver. 33; and so, for the same reason, we are not to forbear to assemble. And the true radical fundamental grounds of this are,

1. Because, as Jesus Christ is the king of saints, so he is an immediate king unto them, Eph. i. 22. As God hath given him to be over all things, so over all things a head to his church; so as in this point of headship, no

inferior power on earth doth come between. In all matters which immediately do pass between, and which concern him and them in this relation, he is an immediate governor to them, and hath put none of his power out of his hands, to magistrates or the civil power. And therefore his ordinances they are to exercise and enjoy, without any immediate commission from men.

2. As he is thus immediate king, so he hath reserved this power to himself; and you shall find that Christ mentions this his transcendent power to this very purpose. He first sent his apostles out to preach, and make disciples: Mat. xxviii. 19, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth (says he). Go ye therefore and make disciples (as the word is), and baptize them, and teach them to do whatever I command;' whereof this, as was shewn, was one. And in this saying, I am not with you only, but those that believe on me, to the end of the world (ver. 10), Christ mentions his supreme power, and shews that he was able to command and make good this; for he had power over all. He commanded it, and promised this; and withal to see the equity of it, consider that he who is over all, and hath derived much of his power to kings and magistrates, his vicegerents on earth, hath subjected the estates, lives, and persons of his saints as men, as well as the rest of men to them; yet that which concerns spiritual power between him and them as their king, he referred to himself, as a so exempt flower of his prerogative. And it is as equal he should assume it and ordain it thus, as it was that God should reserve to himself one day of seven, having given us six. So doth Christ allow magistrates power in temporal things over men, and all creatures here below; only his peculiar people, and royal nation, as they are saints, and in things pertaining to him and his worship, he hath exempted them. The magistrates are indeed to use their power, to see his laws kept; so that this liberty of ours is not to be maintained and practised of us, as our liberty, but as Christ's prerogative, which we his courtiers are not to suffer to be encroached upon, or diminished.

3. As he is thus a king immediate, and hath reserved this power to himself, so he hath given and imparted all to his saints, that might fully enable them, and qualify them for it.

(1.) By giving them right, and such a right, as is natural to a saint, as a saint, and therefore can no more be encroached on by them than natural liberties of men, as men, may be invaded. The saints (as was said), by reason of the divine nature, do breathe after a fellowship one with another, even as every one, as a man, doth after fellowship with one of the same kind. It is not good for man to be alone (as God said, Gen. ii. 18), and therefore he created the woman, and besides instituted that ordinance of marriage in paradise, for the comfort and propagation of mankind. The right unto which fellowship, and the comforts of it, belongs unto a man or woman as such naturally, as likewise there is a natural propension to it. So likewise to satisfy this common desire in all saints, of having fellowship together, Christ, the author of this new world and generation, ordained this ordinance of a church, and ordinances to be enjoyed in it, for the building up of the new creature, and the propagation of it to others. And likewise the right unto this fellowship, and the ordinances of it, doth reside in a saint, as a saint; and so in all saints, wherever they be. So Christ says of children, Mark x. 14, 'Suffer them to come to me, and forbid them not, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' that is, they have right in me, as well as you, and in some ordinances, as well as you. But more expressly the Holy Ghost speaks, Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do the commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and to enter into the city.' He speaks of that glorious church afore the end of the world, which was that

city, and the tree of life is Christ, in the ordinances of that church; for so to Adam, the tree of life was a sacrament of the second commandment. Which tree of life standing in the city, a man must first enter into, and be admitted into the city, and then to the eating of that tree. So that,

1. He that doth the commandments, and is a godly man, hath a right as such both to the sacraments and to a church fellowship, but to the sacraments but remotely, and not till first admitted into the city; so that a saint's immediate right to the sacrament is founded in a church state, into which he must first be admitted; yet such a radical potential right he hath as he ought to be admitted; as every man, as a man, hath a right to marriage comforts, but yet remotely, for he must be married first and entered into that fellowship, and then he hath an actual right.

But, 2, he hath to a church fellowship a more immediate right, so as there is nothing betwixt him and it, but only that others join with him in it, as in a marriage fellowship it is.

3. Unto this fellowship and ordinances none other have a right: ver 23, 'Without are dogs, and that make a lie,' false professors; and Rev. xxi. 27, 'There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth,' &c.

2. As they thus have a right to this fellowship and ordinances (Christ having ordained them, and them alone, as the children's bread, and not for dogs), so Christ hath given them an immediate power from himself to enjoy these ordinances, not deriving it from any other power whatever but his own; wherein it doth in part differ from that ordinance of marriage, to which, though a man hath a right as a man, yet parents have power over their children, 1 Cor. vii. 37, to enjoin them in this ordinance, that their consent be asked and obtained; but it is not so in this combination spiritual, unto which a saint, as a saint, hath both a right and full power to cast themselves, and join in such a way immediately, not only without asking magistrates' consent, who as in marrying of the subjects they have no power in any commonwealth, nor are to have (it being an act of natural right, not civil, and so out of his bounds), so much less have they power in this spiritual union, it being a spiritual right, which is transcendently more out of the sphere of their authority and power. Also, according to the law of nature, kings have nothing to do with family government and order, to appoint whom I shall admit, &c., because their power presupposeth family government first; much less have they power in God's family matters.

(1.) It is true indeed they have a power to permit it. So Cyrus gave commission to build the temple, and protected them in it; and therefore Paul bids them in their congregations to pray for kings, 1 Tim. ii. 2–4, 'That they may lead peaceable lives in all godliness,' and so in all the ways and ordinances of it. And that advantage the saints have when magistrates are godly, &c.

(2.) They have power to exact the performance of Christ's laws. Magistrates have a power to punish saints that are their subjects, if they neglect any ordinance, and so if they neglect among the rest this duty of casting themselves into assemblies. And God's good hand may be with them in such commands, as 2 Chron. xxx., when Hezekiah sent out commands to the people to assemble to the passover, ver. 12, 'The hand of God was to give the people one heart, to do the commandment of the king by the word of the Lord.'

(3.) They need not to expect their power or leave for their gathering unto a church, as if without it such a combination were unlawful, nor to forbear out of conscience of their prohibition. If indeed they used force or persecution actual, they might forbear their assemblies, as the disciples, Acts viii. 1, and

scatter themselves; but not because of the command simply, but the persecution, because God will have mercy, not sacrifice.

(4.) Christian magistrates have no more power herein than heathen magistrates, for his conversion increaseth not his power, but sanctifieth it; and therefore not as Christian magistrates are we to expect their leave if we have immediate power from Christ.

3. Christ hath invested his saints with such a power by giving them power to judge of and to call each other to come into such church fellowship: 'Let us go to the mountain of the Lord,' Isa. ii. 3; for the spiritual man judgeth all things, and is judged of none, and therefore is supreme judge in things spiritual, as this merely is. As he is a judge of truths (so as he needs no outward judge in doctrines), so also of persons; and if they have power to judge them within without the help of magistrates, then also to judge whom to take in.

4. Christ invests them with this right by communicating his offices to them. Even as Moses put some of his power upon the elders, so hath Christ on his church. They are kings and priests, and made so by him; and if so, then in what they are kings, they are supreme and independent, Rev. i. 6; and as he is to have an eternal government over them, so they are to have towards one another in his church fellowship.

5. This kingdom is too transcendent for the sphere of any inferior power to deal in, for theirs is but of this world; but 'my kingdom,' says Christ, 'is not of this world,' John xviii. 36; and if they have nothing to do in things natural, which men as men have a right and power to do, much less in that which is spiritual, and which belongs to saints as saints.

6. It is a liberty that Christ hath purchased for his saints, which, whatever it be, we are to stand fast in, Gal. v. 1. Now this is part of our liberty, that in matters of worship, which are things of another world, we are not subject to ordinances of men: Col. ii. 20, 'Why, as living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?' In things of this world you may be so, but not in things of another world, such as Christ's ordinances, whereof the fundamental one is this of church fellowship; which liberty, though the defence of it hath cost us our liberty in the way we once went in, and in the ordinances then enjoyed, and so in some things, and especially in some times, may be a snare, yet it is a royalty which, take all times and seasons that may run over the church's head, is for our advantage, that by virtue of it in all times we may enjoy the ordinances as freely from Christ in one time or age as in another.

7. For that was the end why Christ ordained it thus; for if Christ had not given this immediate independent power to the saints as well as right, then they might in some ages, yea, in most, never have enjoyed that which they had a right unto, and so that right would have been in vain. But Christ did not leave his saints so destitute, but that, as he gave them a fitness for a church society, desires after it, a right to it, and ordinances to be enjoyed, so he gave this power to enjoy them independently, let magistrates, &c., be in all ages what they will.

Thus you see what power and liberty we have to begin a church; but then again the question and case will further be put, that we living under Christian governors, and among churches and congregations allowed by them, what warrant may we have for this apart, and clanculary practice of setting up such a church as this?

In answer to this, suppose them churches we will, as indeed I will not dispute it; (only to any of you that think them not, you have the fuller warrant for that practice, warrant enough for that opinion, which I have not),

therefore I will go upon supposition, and such grounds as all may and will agree upon.

1. Though they are churches, yet if you were never truly members of any, you are free to begin where you will, and so to be of the best. This liberty we under the gospel have, that the Jews had not; for there being to them but one church, and that was national under the high priest, they were in no case to set up another, and but in case of idolatry to remove from communion with it. But now under the gospel, churches may be erected everywhere by saints, and it is free to them to join with whom they please. Now for us, whether any of us may account ourselves members of any of their churches, needs not much examining. To give ourselves up to such a fellowship with those with which we did partake the ordinances, was not our intention then, but we came to receive Christ, as members of his mystical body, and so as such who had a personal right to Christ, and that was all; which acts, though God accepted, winking at our ignorance, and for those times and occasions of receiving sacraments, accepted them as church acts, yet not such as to oblige us to the congregation we received in, we intending no more special communion with the saints therein in one than in another.

2. Though they are churches before God, and so to be acknowledged by us in our opinion of them, yet they are not such as necessarily we should be tied to continue in, and not to remove from.

(1.) Because they are churches defective in ordinances, it is warrant to remove to such a church where all may be enjoyed (which, do what we can, could not be in them), and this by virtue of that liberty mentioned under the gospel. So as it is not a removal from no church to a church, but from a defective church to a church more complete in all ordinances of prophesying, offices, excommunication, &c.; and in such churches where the admission useth not to be formal, the leave to depart needs not be formal.

(2.) Because they are defiled churches to our judgments, and so defiled as, to continue in them, a man himself would become defiled also. In this case a man may remove from them, and therefore much more he may choose whether he will engage in them when he is free; for though they remain churches to my judgment still (as a leprous man is a man), and that because they are so in God's acceptation, yet to me they are the same as no church, if I cannot enjoy the ordinances in them, or shall be defiled in the enjoying them, so as they may be churches as to their state, when not in use to me.

As, 1. If to the free enjoying any ordinance anything sinful must be practised, as in receiving the sacrament, let that church be in itself and in my judgment otherwise never so reformed, yet if this be imposed on me, or I must not receive, it is no mother to me, for it denies to me, her child, the bread which is due to me as a child's portion.

2. In other practices it is so defiled, as that I cannot constantly be a member in it but I must also be defiled; as in mixed receiving, in which, since the wicked are made one body with the saints, there is a sin which lies somewhere, 1 Cor. x. 17; and if that be not exercising this power which is due to a congregation, and which they are not to forbear to exercise, in casting out such is a sin of the whole, and it be a duty not to join with them, then I am not to partake constantly with them (because then I should partake of their sin) in such a mixture, and should also sin in omitting the ordinance of withdrawing from them, 2 Tim. iii. 5. The command being, Ezek. xliv. 24, that God's laws shall be kept in all the assemblies (especially seeing, by the godly's presence, they become assemblies, and God vouchsafes unto them that privilege), they again should see to execute his laws, which from Christ independently they have transmitted to them. However,

if this practice and omission be made but doubtful unto me, it is to me a sin to continue among them.

3. Though it should be granted that I might occasionally receive the sacrament in them (as being churches *pro hac vel illâ vice*), yet it will not follow that I should be a constant member to continue with them; for in such an occasional receiving I am not so made a member as to be called to exercise any such judicial act of casting out the bad; but it lies on them who are constant members of it, who, by their approbation, make themselves one body with them.

4. But in even such a receiving occasional, I am not to partake till I am a settled member in some church; for, as was said, this is a church ordinance, which, as a mystical member of Christ, a Christian hath but a remote right unto; and therefore I must be in a church ere I partake of it anywhere. And seeing we are not so in theirs original members, it is necessary we be of a more pure church, ere we can be capable of receiving the Lord's supper.

5. This church society, therefore, is not a separation from them as no churches in themselves, but as no churches to us in use; for separation is so to part from them as to condemn them for no churches (as when the saints came out of the world they are said to separate from it, as condemning it as lying in wickedness and unregenerate), but so we separate not from them; not as from no churches to our judgments, but as none fit for us to join with.

6. This our not separating, we may testify by holding such communion with them wherein we may not be defiled; and by virtue of this our church fellowship, have this further improvement by their ordinances as to partake with them in a new relation. And so it is not a separation, but a new moulding of a new church more complete; as when a man that pulls down an old house, and builds with the same materials a new one more complete. And herein we may do as the saints did in Jerusalem; they were joined in a church fellowship Christian, and yet went to the temple, and enjoyed the ordinances there, Acts ii. 46; which Jewish church they rejected, not as no church, though such as was to vanish afore the new.

7. It need not trouble us that this is not a visible church (that is, in the exercise and profession of it); for though that would be more comfortable, yet it is not of the essence of a church, it being but an adjunct. And it is called visible, not in respect of a necessary visibility to others, but as to themselves, and one to another. For so, in the primitive times, their congregations were not things visible to wicked men, but in secret to themselves, the church being fled into the wilderness.

8. No danger is to restrain us from doing our duty herein, as in the primitive times it did not, when persecution was more hot than now, Heb. x. 25, 33, 34. It is true, God will have mercy rather than sacrifice; but then, if the enjoying sacrifice be a greater mercy than the loss of what is hazarded can be; if both being put into the balance, sacrifice is the greater benefit of the two, compared with what is hazarded, then we are to choose sacrifice rather, even by virtue of that rule, that as 'the body is better than raiment,' so the soul than merely liberty or estate. Though in case of life it would alter, for then you take away the subject which should enjoy the sacrifice itself. Therefore, when the persecution was but the spoiling their goods, Heb. x. 33, 34, they forebore not to assemble; but when it touched life, they dispersed themselves, Acts viii. 1.

CHAPTER V.

That it is necessary there should be various kinds of officers in a church, and that each should be settled by a divine institution.

I shewed before what the constitution of a church is; that, as it was to be a body of saints, so also an ordered body, as Col. ii. 5 is intimated, and elsewhere; which order, as I then said, noted out two things: 1. Enjoying all ordinances; so 1 Cor. xi., ver. 23 compared with ver. 24. The Lord's supper is reckoned a part of the apostolical orders; and ver. 1, the institutions of the New Testament are called traditions, &c.

And, 2, that order consists in their ranking their members into such offices, according to their gifts, as Christ hath appointed, that so all the ordinances might be enjoyed.

I shall now shew the necessity of officers and ministers in a church.

It may abundantly convince us that Heb. vi. 2, imposition of hands, is reckoned as one of those six points which are of the foundation and first principles of religion. ver. 1, laid by those master builders, and by the sign used at the ordination and calling of officers, the use and power of the ministry and officers of a church is meant; and placed here next, and conjoined with the doctrine of the sacrament (baptism being here put for both, as breaking bread is elsewhere put for the whole Lord's supper), because the one is conjunct with the other. Answerable unto which in the reddition is tasting the good word of God, which useth to be dispensed by those officers. The partaking of the Holy Ghost is especially in baptism and the sacraments, and he usually is poured forth more abundantly at the sacrament. This establishment of officers in a church is not indeed necessary and fundamental to the personal salvation of a Christian, yet unto the building of them up, which is as necessary as conversion.

And therefore answerably, the course of the apostles was, first, to go to plant and convert men to Christ, and then to knit them into church fellowship, as Acts ii. 47; and then a while to leave them till men fit for offices should be found amongst them, by trial of their gifts and soundness of their conversion, and then to send evangelists, or themselves again to visit them, both to confirm them in the faith, and also to settle officers and elders amongst them, according to Christ's institution.

And thus in every church these officers were settled, so Acts xiv. 21–24. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, confirming the disciples; and when they had chosen elders in every church, with prayer and fasting they departed, ver. 13.

And where themselves could not come they sent evangelists, as Titus to Crete, Tit. i. 5, for this cause, to ordain elders in every city where churches were planted; so as the great care and work of the apostles and evangelists was at first to gather churches, so then to set officers over them, and so to commend them to their charge and God's grace. So in Ephesus, Acts xx. 17, 28, 32, for then they made account they had provided for them as much as in them lay, even as parents do when they see their children married and well bestowed. The use and excellency and necessity of them to the church might many ways be demonstrated unto us.

1. These officers and gifts are the joint and distinct work of all three persons. They conspire and have a distinct hand in framing them for the church, as well as in the great work of our salvation. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost meet in the making and ordaining officers, and each person dis-

tinctly contributes something. As we gather the excellency of the creation of man above all creatures, because the whole Trinity say, 'Let us make man,' and so of redemption, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost set their hands to it and bear offices in it, so we may infer the greatness, necessity, excellency of officers in a church and their holy communion, because all three persons, not only as in other works, but distinctly and apart, concur unto it. So we have it at once told us, and we need not have recourse to several places for it, 1 Cor. xii. 4–6. Those three persons are the three great officers in our salvation, and these officers in his church are the lesser; Christ is the chief pastor, they the inferior under him, 1 Peter v., and so are co-workers with the Trinity: shall all three persons concur to constitute them, and shall we neglect to have them?

2. They are the gifts bequeathed us by Christ at his departure; and his last gift must needs be a great one, and so to be esteemed by us, and made use of accordingly. To have a gift given (which is ordained simply for use, or else it is made vain and ineffectual), and to let it be unused, what a slighting is it of any one's love! If a garment be given as a legacy to wear, what a contempt of the donor's gift would it be to sell it! Now, officers are Christ's legacy, and his last legacy, Eph. iv. 11; when he ascended, 'he gave gifts to men,' as Elias, at his ascending, obtained a resting of his spirit on Elisha. And what were those gifts, ver. 11, save apostles, pastors, and teachers, &c.? And mark it, the gifts given, that make them to be pastors and teachers, are not alone said to be the gifts, but the men endued with those gifts and put into those offices, pastors, teachers. The ministers themselves are gifts, and so their gifts became of double and treble use when officers to what before when private men. Thus in like manner, Num. xviii., of the Levites it is said, to you they are given as a gift from Jehovah, and as to serve Jehovah, so them also. And Num. xviii. 7, Aaron's service is termed a service of gift; and next to God's Son and Spirit, these are the greatest gifts, because conveyers of both to us. If a precious jewel were given you, would you not place it in a ring, where it might shine and adorn you? If a loadstone, which of itself would draw, yet would you not set it in steel, that it might draw more, and not let it lie unuseful? Thus do with the gifts of men among you, which in office will be more serviceable, shine more, give a greater lustre.

And the rather do this, for thereby you give their gifts again to God, and return them to him. So when the Levites were consecrated by the imposition of the people's hands, Num. viii. 9–11, they were offered as a wave offering, says the Hebrew, to the Lord, and as a gift, says the Septuagint, that they might execute the service of the Lord. Some services you cannot do without them, and so God is a loser of worship, which is imperfect without them.

And then, 3, God in recompence again will come, and will be more present with you than before. For this compare but Ps. lxviii. 8 with that Eph. iv. 11, it being the place whence these words are taken, 'Thou hast given gifts to men, to dwell among them.' When Christ ascended, he became absent from his church; therefore, when he ascended, he gave these gifts, that by their ministry he might dwell in their hearts by faith more, and also by his Spirit. By these officers he buildeth the house more and more, and adds to it both *intensivè* and *extensivè*, more members and more graces, Eph. iv. 12, for the perfecting the saints and building up the body of Christ (as also 1 Cor. iii. 10, 16); and when he hath built them up, and the more, the more he dwells among them, and the more he delights to do it when the house is finished and furnished with all his officers. Yourselves

love not to dwell in an unfurnished house; you would have all utensils and servants of all sorts about you; you will stay removing till a house is furnished; and as God brought man into the world not till it was finished, so doth Christ. God would have his people first become a church, that he might meet and dwell more among them than when the stones lie scattered here and there; so Mark xviii., his promise to invite us to be a church is, 'I will be in the midst of you,' and Ezek. xlviii. 35, 'the name is, *the Lord is there*,' and then when you have officers and ordinances dispensed by them, then you have a further presence, he will come down oftener amongst you. The more of ordinances, the more of Christ; the more of officers, the more of ordinances.

And 4. The effect of them, and God's dwelling will be growth in grace; so it follows, Eph. iv. 13, 'till they all come to the fulness of the stature of Christ.' As in the body, after it is begotten, God hath appointed ordinances of food, sleep, &c., for the growth of it; and if any of those ordinances are wanting, there is a decay of strength or health, and a defect in growth; so if any ordinances be wanting to the new creature, you will find the defect of it in your souls; and for all such ordinances for growth officers are appointed, and their ministry, so Acts xx. 32. After they had elders, he commits them to their charge, and the word of his grace in them to build them up; his speech implies that they were all converted, else they had not been of a church. They wanted now nothing till they came to heaven but building up; so it follows, 'to give you an inheritance with them that are sanctified.' And there is that near connection between heaven and building up in grace, because growth is as necessary to bring us to heaven as conversion. As therefore you would think the ministry necessary for the salvation of your children to convert them; so of your own souls for growth in grace, so as you cannot be saved unless you grow to such a pitch, to that fulness of stature which in Christ God hath appointed you. 'Except ye be converted,' says Christ to his disciples, 'you cannot enter into heaven,' as well as except ye be born again; and though many have grown to that perfection without ordinances, being ignorant of them, yet none that know and may enjoy them. And therefore also of Timothy's ministry it is promised he should save himself, and them that heard him; so as they are necessary to a man's salvation that knows them to be ordinances, and ordinances appointed.

If you ask the reason of this connection and necessity, it is true it is not absolute, as was not Christ's satisfaction, as Christ intimates when praying the cup might pass. He says 'all things are possible,' but yet it was necessary, because it was God's will so to have it. Thus God could save you, build you up without ordinances, and so he hath many, but yet hath appointed these, and having appointed them, to those that know it they become necessary, though they are not such in themselves, yet because so it hath pleased God. The reason of diversity of gifts and administrations, we find, 1 Cor. xii. 18, 'God hath set the members in a body, as it hath pleased him;' that is all his reason; and answerably that which he says, referring to this, ver. 28, that God hath set some in the church, first apostles, prophets, teachers, is for the same reason also; it is as if you should seek a reason why bread and wine of all creatures are typed out to be elements sacramental. There is no reason but *so it pleased;* so if you ask, Why these ministries? there is no reason but so it pleased him, and there was no reason of necessity absolute, but only the will of God; for he that governeth the angels and the church above us immediately by his Spirit, and all the creatures below us (who yet continue to this day according to his ordinances in their course he set them, Ps. cxix. 91), in which course they are acted by

an invisible power of his immediately concurrent, could in like manner have governed men, yet chose, as to have the world of men governed by magistrates, so his church also by officers of his own institution and appointment; and as of all other of God's appointments else, so of this, we may behold and admire a glorious and wise harmony and conveniency and suitableness, that so it should be.

What in particular is the conveniency and necessity of each office in particular, as suited to all particular necessities of a church, I will shew when I speak of each particular office and their distinction. I omit also their use and necessity in respect of them without, to convert and add men daily unto the church, which is one great end of their office mentioned, Eph. iv. 12, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν, which imports the jointing in members into the church, and gathering in all the saints, and making their number perfect, as others read it.

Now we chiefly speak of them in relation to a church instituted and their edification, which is the other end there mentioned, where he also tells us that these institutions, as also this ordinance of particular churches, shall last but till that general meeting or concourse of all saints in their perfection, as the word καταντήσωμεν signifies, when there shall be but 'one fold,' and one shepherd, John x. 16. But until then, he hath appointed the ministry of apostles, &c., whose ministry we enjoy not in their persons but writings; and ordinary officers we enjoy in their personal employments. We will but take the reasons which he doth there insinuate.

1. Because the church is under age (which he implies, ver 13), therefore she is to have these officers over her, until she come to a perfect man, and to the full stature. And children under age, now as well as then, are to be under tutors and governors, Gal. iv. 2. And though we are not in such bondage to beggarly elements, but comparatively are men grown, yet as we are not perfect men, not come to that full stature we shall come to, so far we are still left under the care and eye of tutors and governors, who yet are not the heads but servants of the church. As great men's children are, whilst at school, learning the elements and rudiments, under the ferula and bondage of schoolmasters, from which being delivered, as being come to more ripeness, yet, especially if absent from the immediate eye of their parent, and travelling in a strange country, their parents set governors to have an inspection over them, to bring them up and instruct them, till they all come home. Thus hath God done with his saints, not as men grown, but whilst they are absent from him here, he hath betrusted them with the government of tutors and instructors, to have an eye unto them, who yet are but their servants; which argues God's infinite love and tender care towards them for their education; yea, though there be but two or three of them in a congregation, yet he will not let them travel here without a guide, as the apostle calls their elders, Heb. xiii. 17. So his promise was of old, Jer. iii. 14, 15, 'I will take you one of a tribe, and one of a city, and give you pastors (not pastor only) according to my own heart.' The education and training up of his children, God accounteth of to be a matter of greater concernment than you can possibly esteem of the education of yours, because, according to their growth here, they are ranked and placed in that body of Christ hereafter, where, if any member should not have its full growth, the disproportion of a member would reflect upon the head, Christ, and cast a deformity on the whole; therefore every member is to grow up to that stature which Christ hath appointed it; and hence, answerably, God takes care for them, and thought it requisite to make it the proper and sole business of men enabled with the greatest gifts that ever were poured out upon men, to attend and look to the

bringing up of his children, and thought it not enough for men to have gifts, but for the improvement of them, to have men set apart to such offices as might be separated (as Paul unto the gospel, Rom. i. 1, and so Gal. 1. 16). The phrase is taken from the Levites, who, Num. viii. 14, are said to be separated to do the service; or, as the Septuagint have it, to the work, which word the apostle useth, Eph. iv. 12; for the work of the ministry is a business of that weight, that they are to give themselves wholly to it, 1 Tim. iv. 5. First, God tendered so much the instruction and proficiency of his children in the knowledge of Christ, which is mentioned here, that he contented not himself to have them enjoy such occasional means as the brethren in communion were able to afford each other, as their callings and occasions should permit, though we all were able to prophesy, but he would farther have men of the best and eminentest gifts set apart usually unto it, by continual labour to perfect themselves and his church. As in a school or college, besides what pupils may get out of books, and mutual conferences daily with others, parents provide tutors for them, and college officers, university professors are set apart to study what to read unto them; so God would shew himself more careful for his, and he would not have his children rendered too extemporary, he would have them fed with the finest fare, and therefore would have men dedicated to his service; yea, further, he would have them grow in knowledge and grace, and every age to exceed another, which is tacitly intimated, as it seems to me, in the 12th and 15th verse; he would have, as every member, so the whole church grow till the day of judgment, and one age to sow, and another to reap a more plentiful harvest. Now this would not have been in an ordinary way and course, unless men were dedicated to this work; for every scribe instructed to the kingdom of God brings forth out of his treasure things new and old, Mat. xiii. 52. If Timothy will profit, and have his profiting appear to all, he must give himself wholly to it, 1 Tim. iv. 15; he must be instructed, and he must have a treasure, and that not of coin only of present current money, but he would have his children enriched with importation of new commodities. And to be such a scribe requires the whole man; such an one was Ezra, chap. vi. 6, 10. Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, that is, versed in it and the meaning of it, and the good hand of God was on him, ver. 9; for he had prepared his heart, ver. 10, to seek the law, that is, to search out the meaning of it, and to do it, and to teach in Israel. Yea, further, the apostle otherwise intimates, that without men being set apart to it, there would have been no preserving of knowledge, but the ordinary sort of believers would have been exposed to the danger of being carried away by seducers; so Eph. iv. 14, 'That we henceforth be no more children,' &c. I take it, he makes it not so much an inference from the former, by way of instruction of what we therefore should be, but goes on to shew the ends of these offices; and the word μηκέτι, is all one with *alias*, otherwise, &c. And indeed, otherwise, our running into error could not have been prevented; for ordinary sort of believers, being children not fully grown up, would easily have been seduced, if they had not had guides committed to them who had been able to convince gainsayers. The apostle useth many metaphors to express their danger herein: as, first, that they are children, and how easily are they deceived; secondly, in danger to fluctuate as a reed in the water, this way and that way, and to have been in doubt what to hold and stick unto; and, thirdly, to be exposed to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, as ships in the water, if there be no pilot nor mariners that know how to steer and guide them. And therefore the words used by the apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 28, concerning ordinary officers, is κυβερνήσεις, that is, governors of a ship; *cubosa* being used in Cicero for

the greater kind of ships then used, built square; and so it follows in Eph. iv. 14. ἐν κυβείᾳ ἀνθρώπων in the ship of men, as Beza says it may be interpreted, wicked and naughty men, if learned, would have driven the ship whither they had pleased. To prevent this he appointed them pilots, the apostles, who left also behind them writings, and ordinary pastors and teachers, who should be more than ordinarily skilled in their writing, and be pilots unto others. And as in that part of growing in knowledge, so likewise for their lives and manners, God would have them watched over, and would not trust the care hereof to that which every brother would have one of another; but thought it worthy of some men's whole pains and care, to whom he might commit the charge of men's souls to watch over them, and of whom he might receive an account, as Heb. xiii. 5, 17. Even as in colleges (besides private help of tutors), there are public lecturers and deans to instruct and overlook the whole, so jealous is God of his church and children, and careful of their education. And there was need of all this, and all little enough; and otherwise, if this business had been in common left to the common care of every member watching over each other, there would have been a defect.

2. As many officers are necessary for the growth, &c., of every member in particular, so for the public managing of common affairs amongst them, for every church is a body, a commonwealth, a city, &c., which, by virtue of their combination, will, as all societies, have many businesses in common that will concern the whole, every church will have their τα περὶ ὑμῶν, as the apostle speaks of the affairs of the church of Philippi, Philip. ii. 20, church businesses, as corporations have common town businesses; and as he intimates there, there had need be some to take care of them, to prepare them, to contrive them, to study them, to manage them. These common businesses are, admission of members, excommunications, and to examine witnesses in case of scandal, to judge of the cause, to give a just weight to the sin according to the balance of the sanctuary. It was an especial office of the priests under the law, to teach the people to discern between the clean and unclean, Ezek. xliv. 23. And in all these things, not only is it requisite, simply for order's sake, that some do in the name of the rest propound, discuss, &c., but also for the ease of the whole; and not only so, but for the better managing and dispensing all things, when men shall make it their business to study church affairs, as men in authority do those of their commonwealth; and, lastly, it conduceth to the more faithful managing of them. For otherwise, that which is every man's business is no man's; and common businesses, if not committed to the especial care of some, are ordinarily neglected, and miscarry, as we see in ordinary experience.

3. It is necessary that there should be many officers in every church, unto whom the exercise of church power may be especially committed, though the power itself be wholly in the church itself, whose servants and helpers they are, 1 Cor. i. 24, and not lords over them; and it is fit these officers should be constantly the same, because the fellowship is to be constant (as was shewed), and through long experience they will be better exercised in such affairs as they give themselves wholly unto.

Lastly, it was for the great honour of Christ and of his church to have such officers as servants to attend his royal spouse, and queen, and children. Princes, you see, have for every small business that belongs to them an officer on purpose, because their persons are so great that no business might be forgotten or neglected that concerns them. Now such provision hath Christ made for his church, that as princes, children, and wives have their courts apart and officers apart, so hath the church whilst here below; yet she keeps

a court, and hath servants to attend her. You may read, Esther ii. 2, 3, how officers were appointed to gather fair virgins for the king out of all provinces, and how Hege with others were to purify them for his bed. So did Christ appoint his apostles and their successors his officers, as children of his bride-chamber (as, Mat. ix. 11, he calls them), who should purify and adorn his spouse for him; and they are jealous over them with a great jealousy, to present them as a pure virgin unto Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 2.

In like manner, in the type, for the honour of the temple, and the service of it, were there so many sorts of officers and attendants to watch, &c, when there was no need; and so it is reckoned up amongst Christ's honours, Ps. xlv, that as his queen stands at his right hand, so that there are honourable women, king's daughters, that are hers and his servants, ver 9, to bring her to him and her virgins, ver. 14. From the necessity of them to us, we will descend to the institution of them by God, which dependeth only on God's will.

I shall now then discourse of the institution of these officers by God, which depends only on God's will, which is our rule in this case. It is God that hath set the members of the body as it pleased him; and as of the members of the body it is said that they are set down in his book, Ps. cxxxix. 16. It is all one here, for in like manner it is said, God hath set in his church some apostles, some prophets, &c., as principal members of that his church, and in his book we must find them all written too. Our parents, who yet are the fathers of our bodies, cannot say how their children should be formed, what members they would have added, nor do they contribute anything to the ordering or placing of them; but God's pencil secretly draws and limns them; nay, we ourselves cannot make a hair black or white, or add a cubit to our stature, can much less add a member which God hath not written in his book; so wonderfully and fearfully are we made in the lower parts of the earth; and shall we think that any, though spiritual fathers, can dispose of the members of the body of Christ, yea, of that body which, Eph. iv. 12, is called Christ's? And speaking of officers, 1 Cor. xii. 28, he says he hath set apostles, &c. The word ἔθετο is the same in both, and it implies, he hath done wisely to an end, deliberately, and not at random, but in a wise and orderly manner.

Authors of the gifts of the members in the church, all will confess they are not. They are χαρίσματα, gifts; and if that be not enough, κατὰ τὴν χάριν, according to grace, as the fountain of them; and if that be not enough, δωθεῖσαν ἡμῖν, given us, Rom. xii. 6. And authors of the success of those gifts, and the operation of them, men will acknowledge they are not. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God must give the increase, 1 Cor. iii. But yet men think they may appoint officers, how these gifts may best be improved, according to their discretion and intention; but what says the apostle in the chapter afore cited, 1 Cor. xii. 4–6? As he makes the same Spirit author of all the diversities of gifts, ver. 4, and the same God author of the several operations of these gifts, ver 6, in like manner the same Lord Christ author of all the administrations or offices in the church, ver. 5, which is set between both, as whereby those gifts should be successfully employed in the church. And nothing is more ordinary than the word διακονία, used there to signify the office or ministry, as διακονία of the apostleship, Rom. xi. 13, of evangelists, 2 Tim. iv. 5, &c. And as gifts are there united and ordained to offices, and stand in a fitness for them, so both of them for operations through God's blessing, even as media and means suited to such an end. Now it is the same power that appoints the end that must appoint also the means, and here in this case especially, seeing the effects always of these means dependeth on God's blessing. If man therefore would undertake to appoint

a new office, he must be able to give new gifts, and to give a success; but so he is not. As Moses then blessed the tabernacle, Exodus. xxxix. 43, when he saw all made according to the pattern or will of God, so God will accompany his own institution only with a blessing; nor can any promise themselves a blessing farther. And so as the apostle makes an enumeration of several gifts as ordinary, ver. 8, and extraordinary, 9, 10, &c., so after an illustration from the several offices of members in the body from ver. 12, he shews, ver. 28, these several offices God hath set in the church both extraordinary and ordinary; and the reason of it is because,

1. The three persons, as was said, sharing the glory between them, to make Christ to have a less hand in his share and allotment, and proper work, than the other two in the other, how dishonourable were it for him!

As it were sacrilege for any Simon Magus to think to bestow at his pleasure the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and dishonourable to the Spirit, so as dishonourable is it to Christ, to think at pleasure to appoint officers in the church; and as great sacrilege every way, especially seeing Christ challengeth it as his own prerogative, and that as the lord, king, and ruler of his church, he reserves the power of instituting and appointing what ministries shall be in his church. Every king will challenge it as his prerogative to appoint what officers shall have his power imparted to them, as the elders had from Moses. Though the people chose the men, yet Moses made them rulers, Deut. i. 13; and God gave them of Moses' spirit, Num. xi. 17, 1 Cor. ii. 13. And allegiance is sworn to the king as supreme, or unto inferior governors as sent by him, as having his power imparted to them; thus supreme are kings often. And shall not Christ the Lord be thus supreme? And there is as much reason for the one as the other, and more; for as the businesses of a kingdom are the king's matters, and so called, 2 Chron. xix. 11, so the matters of the church are the Lord's matters, and so called there in that place.

2. The second reason is, because every officer in the church hath the power of Christ imparted to it, and he must communicate it. I have all power in heaven and earth, says Christ, and he bids them go and teach; and this he speaks to all that should teach to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 18. Christ's power is a part of his image, and it is high treason in man to stamp it upon any but by his authority. It is true that officers in civil things men may appoint; which officers (and not their laws) as the coherence shews, are therefore called, by way of distinction, ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις, human creation or institution, thereby to distinguish them from divine institution, which officers in the church are; and every such officer is κτίσις, a creature, and a power must go to make it; but it is such a creature as all the power of men and angels cannot make, none but this Lord from heaven. 'A man can receive nothing,' says John, speaking of power in things spiritual, and of Christ's ministry, except it be given him from heaven, John iv. 27; and the like Christ again intimates of John's ministry, Mat. xxi. 25. The baptism (says he), that is, by a synecdoche, the whole ministry of John, was it from heaven or from men? whereby he expresseth it to be unlawful if from men. And the like Paul says of his ministry and apostleship, Gal. i., that as he had Christ's full call to it, it was not given of man, that is, it was not merely human. And if it be said that these things are true of such extraordinary callings, the answer is, that, Eph. iv. 11, 12, and 1 Cor. xii. 28, ordinary and extraordinary are made alike in this respect, that Christ gives them; and so 1 Cor. xii. 28, where he tells us that God sets them in the church, he reckons up both ordinary and extraordinary. No, Christ is the Lord, and appoints his own administration here on earth; he is Lord over his own

house, Heb. iii., and fit it is he should appoint by what kind of officers his house should be governed: Luke xii. 42, 'Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion in due season?' Mark it, it is whom the Lord shall make. Now, such great officers are ministers, 1 Cor. iv. 1; Moses and all the apostles were but servants, as it is there, and did all by appointment. He built not the house there, ver. 4, nor added anything of his own head. All officers in that house, and their distinction then, was according to the pattern, but Christ is Lord; Timothy, an evangelist, he must take rules how to behave himself in the house of God, 1 Tim. iii. 15, having mentioned officers to be ordained in the verses before. So, then, Christ is to give orders for God's house; and as he is the Lord, the house is his own; and he is a faithful Lord, much more than Moses; and he as a Lord built the house, ver. 2–4, and so as faithfully, as a Lord, hath appointed all offices in it, and things pertaining to it, as Moses, whose faithfulness lay in doing by pattern. It was part of his last work mainly after his resurrection, Acts i. 2, 3. Then he spake of things pertaining to his kingdom; and it is observable that it is placed at the beginning of that work called the Acts of the apostles, shewing the scope and argument of what should follow to be, especially those things which concerned his kingdom; and that book contains not so much the doctrine as example of the apostles in ordering churches. But if it be said such institutions as these are such petty matters of his kingdom, as he reserves them not to himself, but leaves the disposing of them to men, the answer is, he is Lord in respect of administration, and so, as Lord, hath reserved them to himself. And, secondly, to appoint what officers are in a kingdom, is a main appurtenance of it; and if the Lord so ordained in all churches for the maintenance of these officers, 1 Cor. ix. 14, v. 4, then what the officers should be much more. For men to appoint officers of the church, is to make Christ a servant and themselves lords, and the institutions then would not be perpetually binding; but as they are from Christ, they are of eternal obligation. For,

1. They proceed from Christ as a King and Lord, as that place shews, Mat. xxviii. 19, where he mentions his kingly office as the foundation of sending them apostles; and, Eph. iv. 11, the entrance into his kingly office, by his ascension into heaven, is made the cause of giving gifts, when his priestly office is subjected to his kingly, as afore his kingly was to his priestly. Now, his other offices remain for ever, and the laws of them all are the same. In his priesthood, Heb. x. 14, he consummated for ever, with one oblation, all that are sanctified; and his prophetical office gives rules of faith but once for all, Jude 3, and why should not the institution of his kingly office also be thus? Heb. xii. 26, 27, 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but heaven also. And this word, *Yet once more*, signifies the removing of these things that are shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.' 'And we have received a kingdom cannot be shaken,' and so the means of his kingdom are unchangeable. He had spoken of the change of those who are servants and officers under the law; but the kingdom we have received, or do receive (so that he speaks not of that state in heaven, but of that under the gospel, which is called *the kingdom*, in which kingdom there should be no more such change), the offices now are unchangeable, and so is the work. And therefore in the closure of that epistle to Timothy, wherein he had discoursed of the ordinary officers of the church, he sets an apostolical seal upon it from him, and all his successors in him, which was never to be violated or broken up: 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14, 'I charge thee to keep this command to the day of Christ's appearing,' &c., that is, all the commands of this epistle, for

else he should not be blameless. And though here he says *commandment*, in the singular, yet chap. v. 21, where he makes the like observation, he says *these*, in the plural. His way of expression is observable, he says,

1. I charge, not counsel, as leaving to liberty.

2. It is a commandment, not a permission.

3. He mentions a living God, and our confessing Christ to our latest breath; they are such truths as we should be willing to lay down our lives for.

4. He tells us that they are to be kept without spot, not in the least part neglected.

It is such an epiphonema as that Rev. xxii., 'I testify to him that shall hear the words of this book, that if he add or take from,' &c. And here, to keep the commandment blameless is all one as not to add or detract, and it is the same power to add as to detract; and man must do neither. And he speaks this as to Timothy, so to all whose duty as Timothy's is spoken of in this epistle. As also Mat. xxviii. 20, and elsewhere, he says of his apostles, in the name of their successors, I am with you to the end of the world.

It concerns us therefore to have a warrant for the officers we choose rightly grounded on the word, and withal we may detest the sin of those who are like Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 31, who appointed priests which were not of the sons of Levi; and yet his variation was not of the office so much as of a qualification of the officer God appointed. And therefore since we live amongst these that are guilty of that sin, let us do as these of Judah when they were to fight against them, 2 Chron. xiii. 9–11. So God shall be with us, and against them, as ver. 12. To add is as great a sin as to take away; so John, Rev. xxii., threateneth the same curse to both, for both equally detract from the power and wisdom of God.

CHAPTER VI.

That particular congregations are each of them to have more elders than one set over them for the public administration of their worship and government.

Not only the synagogues among the Jews, to which congregational churches bear a resemblance, had more elders than one in each of them, but the churches constituted under the gospel had so too. So these churches, Acts xiv. and Titus i. (which we have proved to be congregational churches), were constituted; for the apostles ordained elders to them in every church, &c. It is expressed *elders*, not *elder*.

Obj. The exception that some have made against this is, that this manner of speech might be used though there were but one elder in each church; as in like phrase of speech, if it were said the king appointed mayors in every incorporation, there would be no incongruity in such a speech, though but one mayor were in each town.

Ans. To which we answer, 1, That it were somewhat an hard phrase of speech to mean church in the singular number, and yet to say, Κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, which is equivalent to Καθ' ἐκκλησίαν, to every church; and it is uncouth, too, to say elders, in the plural, as respectively to every one of these churches, and yet to mean but one elder in every of these churches.

But, 2, to follow the example given: if some of those towns in the supposition had more mayors at once than one in them, though some others of them had each but one, then to speak uniformly of all alike in the plural were not so distinct; much more if the king should give direction (as Paul

doth here to Titus) in such a way of speech to appoint mayors in every incorporate town; and yet his meaning be in some to have more than one, and in others but one, how would this direction be understood if he speak in the plural of each? Now, so is the case here; for that the apostle planted more elders than one in some churches may be evidenced, and we suppose will not be denied; much less can it be affirmed that there should be a confinement unto the number of one elder in each church, and so there was left a privilege and liberty of having more. Yea, if there be two kinds of elders, teaching and ruling, and of teaching two kinds also, pastors and teachers, there may be three in each congregation. So as if we consider that elders in the plural are mentioned, and that they are expressed to be in every church in the singular, who will not conclude the Holy Ghost's intent to have been that elders, and not an elder only, should be in each church? Yea, surely his meaning would be so understood of any that should read it, unless it can be shewed by some other place that his appointment was to define that but one elder should be in each church.

3. It is especially remarkable that he adds (Acts xiv. 23) *αὐτοῖς* to *κατ' ἐκκλησίαν*, which imports that he chose and ordained elders in every church *to them*. He satisfies not himself to have said *in every church*, but adds, *to them* also, to shew that he meant not elders to many churches in a common and indefinite phrase of speech, but proper to them in each church; not in one church one elder, and another in another, and so elders in every church, speaking collectively, but by way of further appropriation, elders to each, *to them*.

4. The comparing these phrases together, elders in every city, and elders in every church, evidently argues the same thing. For when he says *elders in every city*, Titus i. 5, he certainly means more elders than one in each city; yea, and a sufficiency of elders for number to rule and govern (or else an episcopal government of one elder alone in each city must be asserted); and therefore, why should not *elders in every church* have the same construction also? That is, that there should not be only one elder in a church, but more; yea, and a company of elders sufficient to rule and govern that church?

5. We never read *church and elder* mentioned, but *church and elders*, either when spoken of in the abstract indefinitely, or when mention is made of any particular church; so as either congregational churches are nowhere intended when church and elders are mentioned, or they had more elders than one over them in relation to them as their elders. Thus it is expressed, James v. 14, 'Send for the elders of the church,' not *elder*, but *elders;* and these not elders of a presbyterial church in common, but such which are properly the elders of that congregational church, unto which the sick person does belong, who are elders to him. For it cannot be supposed the duty of all the elders that make up a presbytery over many congregations, to visit the sick of all those congregations, and to be sent for, but the duty is incumbent on the elders appropriated to that congregation. Also, when all sorts of obedience to officers is called for, it is still in the plural, 'Obey them that have the rule over you,' &c., Heb. xiii. 7; it is spoken in the plural, not *him* only, in the singular. Also when the apostle writes to Philippi, he writes to 'the bishops and deacons,' not to one bishop, Philip. i. 1. Peter speaks answerably, 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 'I say to the elders that are among you, Feed the flock,' &c. So at Ephesus, Acts xx. 17, Paul 'sent for the elders of the church.'

6. As his own example was, Acts xiv. 22, that 'he ordained elders in every church,' so he enjoined Titus to do the like; 'to ordain elders,' as he

had appointed him, Titus i. 4. This argues that he appointed it so to be, and so hath left it unto us, and that it was made an institution.

7. In Colossus, there was two teaching ministers: Epaphras, of whom the apostle saith, 'Epaphras, who is a faithful minister for you, who is one of you;' and Archippus, of whom he saith, 'Say to Archippus, Take heed of thy ministry,' &c., Col. iv. 12, 17.

8. In Philippi, which was a church in the beginning of the gospel (so he calls it, Philip. iv. 14), there were bishops and deacons, Philip. i. 4.

9. As the natural body consists of more sorts of members than one, that are public organs for the use of the body (as the apostle reasons, Rom. xii.), so a church organical should have more officers and elders than one, or of one sort, as the apostle also doth there exemplify.

CHAPTER VII.

That the Lord Jesus Christ hath not only appointed many officers to be in every particular church, but hath assigned offices of different kinds, which they ought to discharge, Rom. xii. 3–8.

We have seen in general, 1, the necessity of officers; and, 2, that they are to be only such officers as God hath appointed, and no other. Now, 3, let us inquire particularly what are these several officers Christ hath appointed in his church. I will not much trouble you with the distinction of the extraordinary and ordinary; they are the ordinary which we here inquire after. 1. Who are the successors of the extraordinary; not in their office, in that degree, and manner, and authority in the church; yet in respect of the essential things administered, they perform the same to the church now that the extraordinary did of old: 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things thou hast heard of me amongst many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, that shall be able to teach others also.' And so when he sent them out, Mat. xxviii., he says, 'Lo, I am with you to the end of the world.' Even as when God first blessed those creatures then existent, in those words, 'Increase and multiply,' he in them blessed all that were to grow up in their name for ever, Gen. i. 2. They are so sometimes put into the catalogue with the extraordinary promiscuously, and the ends of both made one and the same; because the ministry is of the same use and necessity to the churches in these times, in that way, as that of the extraordinary was in theirs, so Eph. iv. 11, 12, and 1 Cor. xii., xxviii. 8–10. And the best way to distinguish the one from the other in such promiscuous enumerations, and to discern which are ordinary, which are not, is to consider what gifts are still in the church, and what are ordinary standing necessities of the church, and what not, and so we shall discern them, as in the places cited. As in the church we find still gifts of teaching in different ways poured out on men, and abilities with spiritual discretion and authority to guide and govern others, more eminent in some men; and bowels and helpfulness in others to administer to the necessities of poor saints; but we find apostles' gifts of miracles and tongues ceased, and so we may in those places mentioned distinguish the one from the other, and may thereby know which of these officers here mentioned are to remain, which not; for God gives gifts in relation to administration. So as there doth remain these ordinary sort of officers, God continuing no gifts in vain, but fitting the one to the other, as 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6, and Rom. xii. 6–8, evidently implies.

In this inquiry, we will consider, 1, how an officer differs in general from

an ordinary member; then, 2, what these officers are, and how differing among themselves. As to the first, he is a servant of the whole, separated to some special work, with special authority in the name of the whole.

1. He is a servant of the whole, so Rom. xvi. 1, and 2 Cor. iv. 5; not simply a member to serve one another occasionally, but more, he ceaseth to be *sui juris*, as servants do. Of Epaphras he says, not only that he is 'one of you,' Col. iv. 13, but, chap. i. 7, 'who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.' All his strength, pains, and abilities are theirs, and to be laid out for their service, to spend and to be spent: Philip. ii. ver. 17, 'Yea, and if I be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of their faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.'

2. Separated to some special work; so the deacons, Acts vi. 3, 'whom we may appoint over this business.' As the apostles chose other ministers, to 'give themselves continually to the word and prayer,' ver. 4; so as though a private member doth the same work, yet he but occasionally, the other makes it his business, his calling, his employment. A brother, when he sees his brother want, is to distribute to his necessities, but a deacon's office is to seek out who want, and in discretion to distribute the alms of the church; that as the Sabbath day differs from other days, that on other days ye are to perform holy duties occasionally, but the Sabbath is set apart for nothing else, so do private members differ from an officer; it is the value of the day, it is the season of it, so in some special service it is work and employment. Archippus must take heed to fulfil his ministry, Col. iv. 17; every private member is to advance his brother, but it is an elder's work to do it.

3. He is invested with special authority, and an authority of right, to do that lawfully in some things which in others he could not. Let a man so account of us as particularly privileged and authorised to be the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. Some things they are so stewards of, that they are kept under lock and key, and without them the church cannot come to them (as the sacraments are continued to be); and other things they do administer which others may, which are yet administered by them in a more special authoritative way, not simply out of gifts, as when they teach or admonish, but out of a special authority of Christ withal, as ambassadors, as if Christ did admonish and beseech, and not a brother only, 1 Cor. ii. 5, ver. 20. And though, to admonish, others' gifts might serve as well, yet, the dispensation is not from inherent gifts so much as an interested power authorising, *virtute officii*, by virtue of office; thus a college seat cannot be set unless they have a governor (because an exercise of power is necessary), though the fellows may have power to choose and instal that governor. John, speaking of Christ's power to baptize, says it was a special power from heaven given, John iii. 26, 27. And in the name of Christ and the church, the act of an officer is as the act of the whole in administering, &c.; not so as to the acts of private members, not so as to every administration of a private brother.

Now, 2, more particularly to inquire into the offices themselves.

1. They are not only many, but diverse; so we find almost everywhere where we find them spoken of: 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 'There are diversities of gifts and administrations;' so Rom. xii. 6, 'having gifts differing,' he says not greater or lesser, but differing, &c. Which gifts and offices are not only different in nature, but in the person also; that is, that several persons have several gifts and several offices, for so 1 Cor. xii. 8. 'To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge'; and, 1 Cor. vii. 7, every

one hath his proper gifts, one after this manner, another after that. And so much as to the scope of this similitude, drawn from the body, as he brings it; for in the members all have not the same offices or action, ver. 4, so as his meaning must be, that several gifts, and so offices, do belong to several persons. And the preface the apostle makes, Rom. xii. 3, is, that every man is to think soberly, or within his own compass, of that measure God hath given him; every man hath but his part, not all. The word translated *sobriety*, σωφρονεῖν, signifies a sound mind. A sound member swells not, so as all are to keep within the compass, neither thinking too highly of their gift or office, nor stretching themselves to an higher or other calling than is given them; for, says he, the members in the body have not the same office, &c., and then, vers. 7, 8, mentioning these offices, he doth it not simply by naming several works, as teaching, exhorting, but as relating to several persons designed to these works, he that teacheth, he that exhorteth. As if he should say of the members of the body, Let that which heareth hear, that member which seeth see, as having several functions, so as there are several and distinct offices in several persons. And the reason why God hath many, and those distributed offices severally, and a several part to be performed by them, is because God would have no one do all, but keep all in sobriety (seeing he hath but his measure), and in mutual ease and charity, that (as 1 Cor. xii.) one member should not say to another, What need have I of thee? that all might both partake and communicate; as also, because the several works in offices would be too much for one, those master builders needed helps, Rom. xvi. 3. And it is for ornament unto the church too, which ariseth out of such a variety. And another reason of it is, that so each work might be the better and more thoroughly done, when every one should, according to his gifts, have a several part given him, which he was wholly to give himself unto. In arts, and sciences, and professions, none prove eminent, neither are they advanced and promoted, but such as give themselves wholly unto some one science; and it is the wisdom of the Jesuits, in disposing of their followers in several professions. And this wisdom and care God hath taken for his church, as a great man, that would have his children educated in several professions, sets over them not one, though somewhat seen into them all, but procures the most eminent in all kinds wherein he would have them instructed, one to read philosophy, another tongues, &c.

2. That therefore which is chiefly to be done is, as to inquire how many there are, so also especially what the diversity or difference is; to seek out the formal distinction between office and office, which is a matter every way of exceeding great moment. That confusion in the offices, and the performance of them, should be avoided, which God hates, being the God of peace and order, and also that God's own institution be rightly kept. We see how strict God was in keeping the bounds of difference between the priests and Levites, they being distinct offices: Num. iii. 10, 'Thou shalt keep the priest's office, and the stranger that comes nigh shall be put to death;' and by *stranger* there he meant not only their brethren the people, but even the Levites their fellow-officers, Num. xvi. 40. And God requires the choosers that they take a right estimate of men's gifts and offices, and suit them according to their proper difference and distinction, that a man's gifts, like waters, may have their natural current to run in, and so as they shall not need to use art to force the streams another way, Philip. ii. 20, 1 Peter v. 2, that so they may naturally take care to feed the flock, not in any the least way of constraint, no, not in respect of their gifts, to which a violence is offered when they are not rightly placed. And so their gifts are to the

utmost improved, and their work the better done, for the edifying of the church. It is an error (as the author of the *Trial of Wits* in his preface complaineth), and a great error, like that which Solomon complains of, Eccles. x. 6, 7, in disposing of dignities unsuitable, that in commonwealths there is not a suiting of natural endowments and callings, to the great detriment of it; there being no man's natural parts, if rightly placed, but would prove eminent; and the like error, if committed in churches, is much greater, by how much the gifts and callings therein are more precious.

Let us therefore inquire into what these are, and wherein their diversity consists, which is eminently the proper scope of Rom. xii. That epistle is, of all epistles, written in a system and form of wholesome words methodically composed, as might be shewn. *Credenda*, or matters of faith, he had handled in the eleven first chapters; and then *facienda*, or matters of practice, from the 12th to the 16th chapter (which he spends in salutations). The instructions concerning their practice are as methodical as the other, and are either their duties as members of the church, in chap. xii., or as members of the commonwealth, chap. xiii., and both in a like method: 1, what the duties of members and officers are in that church, to ver. 9; 2, what the duties of them as saints towards their brethren, and also all saints, in the following verses of chap. xii. As the like, chap. xiii.: first, their duty unto officers in the commonwealth, from the 1st verse to the 8th; then towards all men, from the 8th verse to the end; and then chaps. xiv., xv., how to behave themselves in the special controversy of those times about the ceremonies, &c. 1. In that chap. xii., wherein he sets rules to them in their church and saint relation, and doth it most completely, I begin, 1, with their service and worship they offer up in public; and he exhorts that it be holy and spiritual, and λογικὴ λατρεία, that is, *word-service*, squared wholly by the rules of the word: for so the word is used, 1 Pet. ii. 2, λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, 'the sincere milk of the word,' opposed to the fatal corruption of worship lying in addition and carnal rites and ceremonies. Or λογικὴ may signify spiritual worship in the mind, opposed to bodily service. As the best preservative of their worship spiritual, and prevention of formality and human addition, he exhorts them not to be conformed to the world, &c. The Holy Ghost foresaw that the worship and service in the church, and that especially of Rome, would be corrupted by the conforming of it to the rites and ordinances of the world, heathenish and Jewish; and the government of the church shaped and configured to that of the empire, in all their officers and members, as many have excellently shewn in all particulars, and was foretold, Rev. xiii. 15. The Holy Ghost foresaw that the pope should set up the image of the first beast, that is, of Rome heathenish, a religion like theirs, and a government like theirs. Item, the apostle exhorts them negatively also, not to conform themselves to the world: μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε, *ne vos configurate*, 'do not shape yourselves,' as noting an outward conforming, shaping themselves to their external worship, &c., to that external form in worship or government, as thinking it to be but used among the heathens and Jews in externals, in which they might take a liberty. And because the spiritual government of a church, and the spiritual worship of it, requires as much as any other truths whatever a spiritual heart, which they are most suitable unto; and that carnal mind or wisdom which is in all men is most opposite thereto, and would frame it its own way; therefore he exhorts them to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, μεταμορφοῦσθε, &c. As the other word notes out an external configuration, which he forbade, so this an internal formation in the mind or judgment (for that is the difference between *forma* and *figura*), which might square with the word and suit with it, having their minds cast in the mould

of doctrine, as Rom. vi. 17, that so they might approve and discern that will, τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἀγαθὸν, that is, good in this particular, with an emphasis, which, is not only good in itself to you, as the only means to build you up, and only acceptable unto God, but so perfect in itself, as it hath been committed to you, that it needs not much wisdom at all to add anything unto it, neither in ceremonies nor offices.

Then he comes to the particular duties: 1, of governors and officers, ver. 3; 2, of every believer in common, ver. 9, &c. 1. To the officers, who had received gifts and functions for the edification of the whole, and who were the principal members of the body, and more eminently unto them, his exhortation, ver. 3, is principally directed, as appears by the instances brought, ver. 6, 7, where he applies and brings home that rule in particular unto all and every one; and though the words might seem to be general to every one in that church, ver. 3, 'I say to every man,' &c., yet the phrase there used, ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν, *existenti*, points at those *eminenter*, and in place amongst you. He says not simply τινί ὑμῶν, but ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν; that is, to those eminent amongst you in place and authority; who, because they were somebody, were apt to think too highly of themselves. And now, when he comes to give officers their charge, observe his preface: 'I say, through the grace given to me.' He speaks modestly, yet lays a command from his apostolical authority, which he averreth and allegeth; for so grace is used by him to express his apostolical office, Rom. i. 5, and makes it *sanctione apostolicâ*, but to put the more weight upon the exhortation, and also to own and warrant their institutions and rules about church government to be apostolical and perpetual. Now, the rule itself which he gives in general, and then appoints and brings home to all the officers of the church in particular, is, as we translate it, 'Not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith;' which of all rules else, in the latitude of its meaning that could be given, is to church officers the most pertinent and fit, the most full and comprehensive, both tying them to the diligent performance of their several duties, and confirming them within the proper bounds of their function. And it is the best prevention of all confusion, innovation, or addition, and exorbitancy in church offices, and likeliest preservative of that primitive purity which was established, and wherein also the Holy Ghost (as in the former about worship) strikes at the root of that corruption of pride and ambition, and stretching themselves beyond their line and authority, which was that true main reason of all transcendent usurpation which, in future times, officers of the Roman church especially took upon them, and after their example all other churches. So as both this rule, and that exact platform and enumeration of all offices, with their bounds and distinction, was the most seasonable and necessary for this church (which was foreseen to be the mother of abominations) of any other, which is the reason (happily) why the apostle is more distinct in it than in any other epistle. We have first the rule, ver. 3; and then, 2, an illustration and demonstration of the equity of it, by a similitude between a natural body and the members thereof, and a spiritual body and the members thereof; and, 3, application of that rule and form of that similitude to all church officers in particular, which, to that end, we on purpose mention, with their distinction and diversity.

We will, first, inquire into the true and proper scope and meaning of the rule, which we shall find to fall full and close with the particular duties of church officers. It hath two parts we see: 1. Forbidding vice, that we should not think too highly above what we ought.

2. Commanding of a virtue, but to rule ourselves with sobriety in such

thoughts. The word is φρονεῖν, which we translate here, to 'think of a man's self;' upon the opening of which word, which is used thrice in composition, in this short sentence, doth the whole depend. It is of a larger extension than any one word either in Latin or English is able to express, and that which is translated is the least thing intended.

1. It hath relation to knowledge, and *sapere*, not to be wise above what is meet, which is a most pertinent direction to the chiefest of church officers, not to affect curiosities of knowledge, falsely so called, above what is written, as those, Col. ii. 18, that intruded into things they had not seen, or above the reach of their own gifts, but to keep both to the measure of their own faith and knowledge, and also to the analogy of that faith once delivered to the saints; and the like also is required in those that rule, in whom, as godly wisdom is as requisite as any other grace, so affected wisdom, and to shew themselves more wise, to control and meddle in everything, is as unsuitable.

But I think it hath not mainly a relation to knowledge, for he says not, Be wise not above what *licet*, is lawful, as having relation to unlawful objects forbidden to be known; but not above what *oportet*, is meet for his place, or becomes a man's place and gifts.

Therefore, 2, Φρονεῖν signifies also *curare*, carefully and heedfully to mind and regard what belongs to him; whence φρόντη,* *cura*, and is all one with that phrase of ours, *he minds his business;* it signifies intention, and what the mind is taken up about. So Rom. viii. 5, we translate it, 'those that are after the flesh do *mind* the things of the flesh.' The word is the same; so as it hath special relation to what is a man's duty and place, which is given him to mind and to regard. And then the first part of the exhortation is, μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν, not to mind or take upon him what is above him; or, as David speaks, not to exercise a man's self in things too high for him (as Ps. cxxxi. 1), for his place, calling, function, gifts; or, as Paul saith (2 Cor. x. 1), not to stretch a man's self beyond his own measure, not into another man's line, nor to thrust his sickle into another man's harvest.

And then, 2, that other particular commanding a virtue, which we have here translated, to 'think of himself soberly,' should be translated, soberly to keep himself and his intention too within his calling, and function, and duty, as he ought. παρ' ὁ δεῖ φρονεῖν, is to do what is his proper duty in his place, and to keep to it, and to spend all his intention thereupon, and not ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπεῖν, not meddle with other men's or officers' matters, as the apostle elsewhere forbids, 1 Peter iv. 15. He therefore is overwise above what he ought, that exceeds the measure of his place; and to be wise to sobriety, is to keep within a man's compass. So that it is not a mere repetition, but implies that as he ought not to exceed, so also that he ought to mind his own place and duty. And then the word εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν is an exhortation to both; it is to have a sound mind, a comparison taken from the body, which is then said to be sound, and a member sound, when it is kept in its natural equal and due temper, and every part performs its own office, swells not above its compass, exceeds not in heat and humours, nor is defective in what belongs to it. So when a member of the church swells not above his rank and place, but executes what belongs to him, then he is said to be sober, and of a right temper in his place. And so, then, that which follows, 'according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,' directs and shews men what it was every man was to put forth in his place, viz., that measure of spiritual gifts which God had parted diversely among men, which gifts are to be suited to offices, as we shall see anon. For by faith here, he

* Qu. φρονητις ?—ED.

means not primarily justifying faith, but spiritual gifts for the good of the church, superadded to faith, which yet he calls faith, because they are not natural, but had some work of faith as their foundation, whether saving or temporary, as 1 Cor. xii. 12. This the apostle plainly intimates, when he shews that those spiritual gifts they had not among them, till they were converted to the faith, but then were endued with them. When you were led after dumb idols, you had none of these gifts, but you had them by a work of the Holy Ghost, enabling you to say and assert, and believe that Jesus was the Lord; which assertion was the foundation of all those spiritual gifts that follows, and so here called faith; as also because that, in the exercise of them, faith should be the director of them to the good of others.

And then, 3, the words may withal be interpreted as they are translated, as aimed against pride and overvaluing a man's gifts, which the apostle also aims and strives at, as the root of all that ambition and affectation of pre-eminence in church officers; and so ὑπερφρονεῖν will also bear that sense. And so, to be wise to sobriety, is for a man to give a due estimate to his gifts, and put them forth accordingly; and hence humility is fully defined (as here), a sobriety or moderation of spirit, which only keeps a man within his compass, and the contrary swells him to matters above a man's calling and compass; and therefore David joins them both together: Ps. cxxxi., 'My heart is not haughty, neither did I exercise myself in things too high for me.' And the drift of the reason implied in the following words, argue this to be his scope.

1. It is God that guides those gifts, and that of grace, ver. 3 and 6; and why should thou boast of what is received?

2. Thou hast not all the gifts, ἐμέρισε, he doth part them; we have gifts differing.

3. Of that very gift which thou hast received, thou hast but a measure, a portion, nor that in the fulness of it.

4. Others have gifts as well as thou; yea, every member hath gifts. God hath dealt to every man, so as thou cannot say thou hast no need of others. So as his scope is at once to beat down pride and ambition, as the cause and affection of pre-eminence, the sin of Abiram, Dathan, and of Korah, who, being children, affected the priesthood; and also he meant to keep every man to his own calling and place, diligently to execute it to the good of others, wherein, how did the Holy Ghost (in writing to the church of Rome) strike at the very sin which he saw then working in that church, which corrupted and perverted all the officers in the churches of Christ, even as he foresaw superstition would corrupt the worship, as was observed in the former verses.

The root of that mystery of iniquity, and foundation of it, was laid in church officers' asserting of pre-eminence, the lower officers assuming what belonged to the higher, as the deacons did; and then the higher taking upon them all the power of the inferior; yea, and of the whole church itself, as to admit members, to excommunicate, to ordain, to rule and govern, and so to thrust out deacons and ruling elders as unnecessary, and those it left continuing to make them shadows; and then these greatened officers presumed further to extend their power over other congregations besides their own.

The bishops of Rome began from thence to challenge universal power over all churches, and from being an ordinary officer, to challenge that extraordinary power of apostles themselves, and to sit in the temple of God as gods; and not to be content with spiritual power neither, but to challenge temporal also, to dispose of crowns, curb, restrain, and cut short the spirit of princes;

and his bishops also began, and have continued, to intermeddle in affairs of state. That ever of so small an egg as a poor pastor of that church, so foul and monstrous a crocodile should arise, so great a prince, is that great mystery which all the world may wonder at, as it did indeed admire his greatness.

How seasonably therefore was this rule given to prevent ensuing mischief; and how necessary was it also, in the application of this rule, to give a complicate and exact platform of church officers, and their true bounds and distinction of their places to this church above all other, who was to become the mother of abominations! How seasonable was it to leave this apostolical canon in her *archivi*, in her records, to discover the falsehood of those which she boasts, and to shew all the world in after times, how much she was swerved from her original, and likewise to enjoin the observance of these institutions, with an apostolic charge, as his preface shews, Rom. xii. 3, 'I say, through the grace given me'!

The scope therefore of that which follows, is to illustrate this rule, and to shew the equity of it, from a similitude drawn from the body, and then to apply and bring it home to every officer amongst them; that as his charge was to every man, he says not *omnibus*, but *cuique*, in particular, ver. 3, so his application is to every one of them in particular, ver. 6, 7. I will not much insist in opening the similitude, only observe for a foundation to what follows, that this comparison here, as it is between the body and such members as have general offices for the whole, so the church he here compares the body unto is an instituted church, whether among them, or wherever else. 1. It is a church he speaks of, for it is a body in Christ, *non in Cæsare*, not a civil body, that is put as a note of difference; for as not only many are requisite, so they are considered not as scattered saints, but as making one body, and so knit; and then the members of this body, to whom the similitude is after applied, are officers of a church, and those ordinary officers also, for those that follow, ver. 6, 7, are the members. He speaks of eminently gifted members here in general, there particularly, and with application. Now we may take this for a rule, that wherever the ordinary officers that are the proper organs of a church as instituted [are spoken of], there the church or body spoken of is principally meant a church instituted; and of the officers of it he speaks indefinitely and universally, 'we being many,' &c., not particularly only *you*, because his scope was to lay down indefinitely a general platform of all other, as well as of this, unto which they were already moulded, and always to be framed. Now then, the fundamental terms of the comparison being thus suited, his similitude hath two main parts, fitted to infer those two parts of that rule delivered.

1. That as in the body many members make one body, and so become members to the whole, and also one to another, for one another's good, ver. 4, so in this instituted body, every one the eminentest and most gifted is a member of another, ver. 5; that is, are ordained for their best profit, and good, and safety, as of themselves and the whole, so of every member, to intend the good of the whole. And of every member in particular, they are to use their gifts with consideration of co-members; and therefore co-membership should oblige church officers, of whom he speaks here, especially to have a care to use and improve their gifts, with diligence in their places, for the good of the whole; and not only so, but also to consider every part in particular, and perform a duty to it, which by their office they are to do diligently. The eye sees not for itself, but for the whole; yea, for the foot, the hand, and every member in particular as occasion is, so as diligence in their office, which is one part of his rule and canon, is hence inferred and argued.

But yet, 2, they are to consider withal, that every member hath not the same office; yea, so far from having the same office, that they have not the same action. So as though every officer and principal member is to be diligent [for] the good of the whole, yet not to usurp over the offices of another, not to do that which is proper for another to do; one member is not to invade the room of another; the foot is not to undertake to see, nor the hand to walk.

Thus to do would be for the confusion of the whole, and an injury to that member whose office is assumed, and to whom it is proper, and its honour to perform it; and the member who usurps another's office would be less useful to the whole, and injurious to itself, in perverting its proper gift and office to what it is not fit, and so to do it untowardly. And this is the second part of that rule given clearly, proven from this similitude. Now then, in the 6th and 7th verses, he goes on at once, both to amplify that last part of the comparison, that as in the body, every member hath not the same office, so that in this instituted body we are members, having gifts differing (enumerating all the particular offices), and also he in the strength of that similitude urgeth and applies, and brings home both parts of the rule in each particular officer, which he enumerates. I say, first he goes on to amplify and enlarge that last part of the similitude, by a distinct enumeration of all particular ordinary officers, needful to such a church for ever. And so the coherence of the words most fitly joints this verse with the former, for ἔχοντες, we having, &c., refer to ἐσμεν in the former verse, the apostle not beginning a new entire sentence, as usually it is read, but continuing these words to the former, as not having made up his comparison complete. That as he had said, 'so we being many are one body,' &c., so we are withal, having differing gifts also, &c., which answers to that part of the comparison, ver. 4, as all members have not the same office. And yet withal they are a strange inference, wherein the apostle brings home and applies both those duties in his rule, ver. 3, to every officer which he enumerates, and that in the strength and force of the similitude; so as that rule given afore should be put into every particular, and therefore in the original there is an ἐλλείψις, a chink and void space left for the reader to put it in, as in those words, first, 'whether prophecy, let us prophesy,' those words, *let us prophesy*, are not in the original, but applied by the translators to make up the sense; whereas that which in general the apostle had said, ver. 3, is to be inserted in that, and all the other particulars, and therefore doth best make up the sense, as whether prophecy, let us soberly mind our duty therein, and not be over-wise, or beyond what is above us, or not ours to meddle in, but keep to the bounds of that office and duty, which is the ἀναλογία of faith; and so in that other ministry (*let us wait on*, is not in the original), but that which he said is to be supplied, let us soberly mind our duty in ministering, and not be over-wise to meddle with what is not our office, but keep to ministering, and so of the rest. So as he doth at once both exhort every one to diligence in their particular office, set him for the good of all, and also dehort him from meddling with what belongs not to him, sends a man to his own body to learn these lessons. All which considered gives a most just and full account and reason why the apostle doth here more distinctly, exactly, and completely reckon up all particular offices in this epistle, which we find not so fully in any other; for it agreed with, and was more requisite every way to, this scope in hand.

For, 1, the making up the similitude entire in the reddition of it, required it. He had said, ver. 4, that in the natural body every member had not the same office (and what are the offices of each member, nature taught).

Then in the reddition and making up of this similitude he shews, in this instituted body, all had not the same offices, by enumerating all the particular offices themselves, and their diversities, which was proper to do, and also was necessary to do, because they wholly depend upon apostolical institution and God's will, and otherwise were not known.

And, 2, his scope was to bring home that rule delivered in general, ver. 3, by way of application, as in an use of exhortation or reproof, a man doth a general doctrine, by naming all and every of those sorts of men he would apply it unto; and, ver. 3, he, in laying down that exhortation, in his preface to it he had said, 'This I say to every man,' not *omnibus*, or to all definitely, but every man particularly, as Musculus observes, as intending to bring it home particularly to every sort of men which he meant and spake unto.

And, 3, one and the main part of his exhortation being, that officers should keep to their bounds, so it was peculiarly necessary, as to apply it to particulars, so to enumerate all and every particular, so to distinguish them, and set them their several bounds, that every one might for ever know his duty, and not transgress.

And, 4, the epistle containing matter of doctrine, wherein he had handled a perfect platform of all other epistles methodically composed, it suited with his scope, that in mentioning the officers of the church also, he should be as complete and distinct, and set down the exact catalogue and table of them.

And, 5, being written to the Romans, whose eminent sin, in after days, was the corrupting of all offices in the church, and introducing new, which God never instituted, and excluding those he had ordained, or perverting them, the complete catalogue of all offices, their bounds, and terms of their duties and distinction, was most seasonable and proper to them, as to prevent aforehand, so to convict that whore of her abominations and usurpations herein in after ages.

And, 6, to add weight to all, and to confirm these canons of his to all ages inviolably, it was requisite he should set to his apostolical authority and seal, which in the preface he doth; 'This I say by the grace given me': and this (as it were) in opposition unto, and to weigh down, in after ages, that false counterfeit apostolical authority usurped, in that see, which would make other canons and constitutions clean differing and opposite to these. His scope, therefore, being to enumerate all officers, and to distinguish them and their duties, which is the thing we seek, let us go on to observe how artist-like, exactly and fully and methodically, he doth it every way, as he had done all else in this epistle. He proceeds,

1. By a διχοτομία, or general division of all officers into two general ranks and orders.

2. By a subdivision, containing all the particulars of that general division, and, to prevent mistakes, lest that because seven are mentioned, that therefore so many particular offices should be meant, as some have understood them, whereas he intends but five. Therefore the first two, to shew they are but a general division of these five that follow, are expressed in the abstract, *prophecy*, *ministry*; but the five particulars in the concrete, '*he that teacheth*,' '*he that exhorteth*,' &c., varying his expression, to make evident the difference.

(1.) There is a general division of all officers into two ranks or orders.

[1.] Such whose duty, and the exercise of their office, lieth in simple ministration, in instruction in the word; the other, of discipline, is that whose work lies in ruling men's lives and bodies. Prophecy hath relation

by knowledge to instruct the mind; διακονία, to ruling and ordering the outward man; and although there were in the primitive times prophets of extraordinary gifts, both in foretelling persecutions to befall the church, as Agabus and others, who also by extraordinary revelation opened difficult scriptures; and who are in other places ranked among the extraordinary officers, as Eph. iv. 11, and 1 Cor. xii. 28; yet here prophets of ordinary gifts are meant, because he prescribes for their rule the ἀναλογία of faith to bound them with. Which rule, the extraordinary assisted infallibly by the Holy Ghost in their prophesyings, need not to be regulated by no more than apostles themselves, the revelation of the Spirit being an infallible guide and rule unto them; and also he commands them to abide in that calling, and confine themselves unto it.

By prophesying, therefore, is meant, that speaking out of the word to men's instruction, as 1 Cor. xiv. 3, prophecy is taken in opposition to gifts extraordinary, vers. 1–3 compared, where he defines it to be a speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort, and is put for the ordinary expounding of the Scriptures, which, 2 Peter i. 20, is called a word of prophecy, and so is taken often in Scripture; as Mat. xiii. 57, 'A prophet hath honour but in his own country;' and so in that speech, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet,' Mat. x. 41; that is, any teacher or instructor out of the word, to *prophesy* not being always taken to *foretell*, but *declare*, as, Exod. vii. 1, God tells Moses that Aaron should be his prophet, that is, a declarer of his mind for him. So to open the revealed will of God is prophesying. So as by prophecy here, their office is understood whose office it is to open and apply the word according to the ἀναλογία of the doctrine of faith, and the proportion of their own gifts, and so is distinguished from διακονία, which includes all external ordering and watching over men, but without labouring in the word; διακονια, which comparatively is a more ministerial and external work, this more internal and noble.

And so now under that general head of prophecy is contained these two first offices mentioned, teaching and exhorting; and under the other, διακονία, is comprehended the other three more external and ministerial functions. Giving is the deacon's office, ruling the elder's, shewing mercy is the widow's. So as, though διακονία is sometimes taken more largely for all offices whatsoever, as 1 Cor. iii. 5, 'What is Paul, what is Apollo? διάκονοι, ministers, by whom ye believed;' and also more strictly, for that most ministerial inferior office of taking care of the poor, as Acts v. 3, 4, and 1 Cor. xvi. 15; yet here, it being made a contradistinct member, it is judged to be taken in a middle sense between both. For all those are ministerial functions which meddle not with the word and prayer, not *ex officio*, so as prophets express a higher rank of officers, that, Acts vi., give themselves to the word and prayer especially; and ministry expresseth that lower rank of external government, either over the lives or livelihoods of men, as the ruling elder and the deacon. The office even of ruling elders, when compared with that of prophecy, takes place rather with deacons, and is reckoned with that inferior classis rather than with the prophets; and unto this division other scriptures seems to give light and warrant, as that 1 Peter iv. 11 maketh it also clear, 'Let him that speaketh, speak as the oracle of God,' which is all one with prophesying here; by the analogy of faith, there is prophecy mentioned; then follows, 'if any man minister' (the word is the same that here), let him do it as God giveth a liberty. There their deacons are a contradistinct division to prophecy. The like I take the meaning of 1 Tim. i. 3, where mention is only made of two officers, bishops and deacons; the question hath been, Under which of these two the

ruling elders comes? I answer, Under deacon in that division; for bishops there must be διδακτικοί, apt to teach, which in an elder is not so necessarily required, many having ruling gifts in private that have not teaching gifts in public; and that also which sways me so to think, is because the qualifications of deacon here are such as qualify a ruling elder, as gravity and ruling their own house well, &c.

And according to the ἀναλογία of these places, that of Philip. i. 1 may, in like manner, be understood. To the bishops (that is, the pastors, and teachers) and deacons; that is, both elders and deacons (strictly so called).

This differing rank of officers seemeth to me also to have been typified out by those two orders of church officers under the law, of priests and Levites, which type I would not have thus applied had I not found it by way of prophecy foretold.

As, 1, it is prophesied that two sorts of officers, answering to both these, should be under the New Testament, Isa. lxvi. 20, 21, I shall be mindful of that rule which, in the application of types, we are ever to follow, that no types are to be applied to anything under the New Testament, but by a special warrant from the Holy Ghost, so applying it in some place of the New Testament, or in some prophecy of the times of the gospel in the Old Testament; because, Heb. ix. 8, the Holy Ghost is alone said to give signification to those types. Yet so as, when we have a general type applied to design out such a thing, then by those ordinary gifts of interpretation we may fetch out the particular resemblances, as we do in parables and similitudes of Scripture when we know their main scope and aim, these being also called παραβολαί, Heb. ix. 9. But to return to Isa. lxvi. 21. He prophesies there, of the times of the gospel, and the state of the church of the Jews when converted; for, ver. 20, he speaks of the bringing in of their brethren the Jews out of all nations, as an offering to God, into the holy mountain and house of God (the conversion of a people being called an offering up to God, Rom. xv. 16); and, ver. 22, he makes mention of the new heavens and new earth, &c. Now, as he says, he will bring their brethren the Jews to the holy mountain and the house of God, which is a church estate (as I have formerly shewed), so he says he will take of them for priests and Levites, which design out in the language of those types, the officers of those churches, all not being meant, for he will take of them; and it being also spoken of some of them, by way of distinction to the rest and multitude of their brethren, ver. 20, it typifies out two general ranks of officers in the New Testament, into which all then instituted are to be referred. And so, in the Old Testament, I find elsewhere that division made of all the Jews into these three heads and ranks: the house of Israel, the multitude of believers, the house of Aaron, the house of Levi, as comprehending all of the church as so considered, when he calls upon them severally to praise the Lord, Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20; even as when, Philip. i. 1, he, writing to the whole church, mentions three: 1, the saints; 2, the bishops, which answer to their priests, pastors, and teachers; and 3, deacons, the Levites, which comprehended all the rest.

I will add, as the conclusion of this difference and distinction of officers, some observations which suit with these differences upon the types of these officers mentioned out of Isa. lxvi. 20; and for suiting the particular resemblances in those types, I will take that liberty mentioned before, which is, having found out the general notion, as priests to typify out preachers of the word, and Levites those three other officers, I will see what stamps of resemblance there are in those types of these offices, which will further clear the difference, and answer a main argument for the pastor's superiorities

over teachers, as it hath been urged by some. Under Levites, I rank all inferior offices, finding a resemblance in the type of deacons over the poor; for there were those that disposed of the treasury of the church among these Levites, who, 1 Chron. xxvi. 20, were over the treasury of the house of God and the dedicated things; and there were also ruling elders among those Levites, who were porters to keep out and let in to the assemblies, and the gate of the tabernacle, 2 Chron. ix. 18–20, as these gospel elders also are to watch over, and especially to regard with the teachers concerning admission, or keeping out of members, to examine and try, &c. They assist in opening and shutting the doors of God's house. There were also ruling elders among those Levites, who watched the temple day and night, and stood before it, Num. xviii. 2, and kept the charge of it, ver. 5; so these are to watch over the spiritual temple, the church, and have their souls committed to their charge, to give an account, Heb. xiii. 17. And then there are an higher rank of officers to whom these Levites are given in assistance (as the deacons were ordained, Acts vi. 3, 4, that the teachers might more fully give themselves to the word and prayer, and 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, are called helps), even as the Levites were given to Aaron, Num. iii. 9, 10, and xviii. 6. The Septuagint says *added*, in allusion to the name of Levi, which signifies *joined* (Gen. xxix. 34); and these officers are these prophets answering to the priests, the priests being to do many things the Levites were not to do. For application of that type;—

1. The priests had the charge of the inward part of the temple, and, Num. iv. 19, they had the charge only of the most holy things, and the Levites were not to go in when they were set and covered; and so the cleansing the inward part of the temple (2 Chron. xxix. 16) belonged to the priests, the cleansing of the outward court to the Levites. So answerably the outward lives and conversations, and the filthiness that appears therein, is the proper sphere and jurisdiction of the rule of a ruling elder; but to instruct and comfort the conscience, to purge out inward corruption by the word taught and applied, and inform the understanding, &c., is most proper to these prophets, the pastor and teacher.

So also, 2, the priests did only burn the incense, 1 Cor. vi. 48, 49, and only did bless in the name of the Lord, and sanctify the most holy things, 1 Chron. xxiii. 13; so these prophets meddle *ex officio* only with the most holy things of the New Testament, being stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1, and put up the public prayers of the church *ex officio*, and are the ordinary mouth of the whole, and so, giving themselves to the word and prayer, are joined, Acts vi. 4, as belonging *ex officio* unto them. And so, to dismiss the church with a blessing, and to administer and to bless the cup of blessing, &c, belongs only to them.

And although the Levites also did teach, 2 Chron. xxxv. 3, and so it might seem that teachers are Levites also, and that there was no such distinction intended between teachers and them,

Yet, 1, to the priests of Levi that charge was in a more especial manner given, Deut. xxiv. 8, do as the priests and Levites shall teach; and the priests' lips were an especial ordinance to preserve knowledge; and so, though elders may now also teach and prophesy, as also other members (and so also other tribes might teach, as Drusius proves; and 2 Chron. xvii. 7, the princes also are said to teach as well as the Levites, as the pharisees did whom Christ bade his disciples hear), yet the priests' teaching was that especial ordinance to preserve knowledge, as now also the pastor's and teacher's office is to preserve the unity of the faith, and to prevent being tossed as children, Eph. iv. 12, 13.

And, 2, the elders also have a teaching which belongs to them *ex officio*, yet of a lower kind than that of these pastors and teachers; and so some, extending that of bishops, 1 Tim. iii. 2, to elders, also apply that 'property, διδακτικοί, unto them; and therefore in common they are exhorted to feed the flock, 1 Peter v. 1, not by a word of exhortation or doctrine, but by a word of admonition. For any sin committed, or duty omitted, or error held, he must be able to convince out of the word that this is lawful or unlawful, to lay open the sinfulness of it, 1 Thes. v. 12. He not only mentions them that labour, that is, in word and doctrine, but them that are over you and admonish you, that is, ruling elders.

And, 3, though Levites did then teach as well, and with the same authority that priests, yet teaching now is one of the most holy ordinances amongst us, which among them it was not, but sacrifices, &c., above it, which therefore did fully enough keep up the distinctions, and made the priesthood an high office. But what was an inferior ordinance then, being in the New Testament one of the supreme ordinances now, therefore that is it that now must make the difference and distinction, and that it is the highest ordinance appears in this, that Paul says of it comparatively to the sacrament, I was not sent to baptize, but to preach, 1 Cor. i. 17.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wherein the distinction of the officers in a church consists, and what are the due and proper bounds of their several offices and duties; the difference between pastor, elder, and teacher stated.—That pastor and teacher are co-ordinate, and that one hath not authority and power superior to the other; what are their distinct offices and administrations.

Now then I come to search and find out the proper genuine distinction of these offices, which is the principal thing which I aim at, and is principally intended by the apostle (in this Rom. xii.), to the end to set bounds to officers not to entrench upon one another's duties and callings, as also to set them more diligently about their proper work. For the clearing of these distinctions here given by the apostle, I must premise this necessary distinction of these offices: that some of them are, as was observed, subordinate one to the other; others co-ordinate, that is, some are inferior and superior, more or less authorised; some are of equal power in the administration of holy things.

The co-ordinate, as I shall shew anon, are the prophets here, viz., pastors' and teachers' office of an equal rank and power; and their difference is to be sought only in the differing manner of administration or ministry of the word. But unto both these offices there is a subordination of the elder's and deacon's office, as also of the deacon's office to the elder's; which subordination, when found out, will help us to see wherein the true difference lies. This their subordination may be exemplified by the instance of subalternate species, that is, the several kinds and ranks of creatures in the old creation, as these officers are in the new (God having made the one as the other, in order, weight, and measure), for instance, as there is subordination between man and beast and plants, so among these three sorts of officers, deacons and widows are the lowest, elders the middle, and teachers or prophets the highest; which subordination, that I may explain it, is not in respect of dependence or derivation of power, as the power of inferior officers civil is dependent upon the supreme, as the king,

&c., no, but all hold immediately from Christ. As man, though a more noble creature, yet gives not life to plants nor sense to beasts, but all hold of God as *in capite*, so here too the tenure is immediate. Though antichrist and bishops would subordinate officers, yet it is not so in God's institution.

Neither, 2, is this subordination in respect of subjection to any jurisdiction of the superior, so as the superior might restrain the inferior of the exercise of their power, as the bishops take on them to silence inferior ministers; no, but every man hath, as his power, so the free exercise of it dependent only on Christ and his church he is placed in, and that so as in his place and office a ruling elder may with authority admonish a pastor, as well as a pastor him, likeas fee-servants in an house all know and are beholden, and subject to each other in their place and offices.

Neither, 3, is it only in respect of a greater or less excellency in their functions that the work of the one is more noble and honourable, and deserves double or treble honour, though that be true, as appears by Tim. v. 17, which might have been, though that work the one doth the more excellent could no way have done.

But, 4, it is in respect of a larger commission that the one hath than the other in the administration of holy things, so as the superior rank, pastors and teachers have, *ex officio*, all the power that the other hath, and more; and so the elders all that the deacons have, and more. That there is such a gradual subordination in these offices may appear, because the apostle, speaking of a deacon's office, 1 Tim. iii. 13, says, he that hath administered it well, 'hath purchased to himself a good degree,' &c.; so in that place also, 1 Cor. xii. 28, he ranks them in superior and inferior classes: 'first, apostles; secondly, prophets,' extraordinary, namely, as Eph. iv. 11, under whom also evangelists are comprehended; and, 'thirdly, teachers;' that is, ordinary teachers, under whom, by a *synecdoche*, also pastors are comprehended, as being of the same rank; and then after that, as inferior to these, among others are promiscuously reckoned up 'helps;' that is, deacons and governors, which are ruling elders. That as apostles had a larger commission than evangelists, being the planters of churches, and had power over all the evangelists, being but their assistants, in settling and establishing them; and as prophets and evangelists had a greater power and gifts than pastors and teachers (all which they had, and more; for evangelists had the gifts and offices both of pastors and teachers, since the apostle chargeth Timothy to attend to doctrine and exhortation, 1 Tim. iv. 13; but here his admonition is, he that teacheth on teaching only, and he that exhorteth on exhortation), so likewise have the pastors all the power that the elders have, as the elders all that the deacons; and what is the work of either, the pastors or teachers may do as their leisure serves, as in Acts vi. 1–3. Originally the apostles themselves (as may be gathered from vers. 4 and 1 compared) did perform that daily administration, but through the burden of it, appointed a special office, that they might attend to their principal and more proper work, yet so as occasionally they might overlook and join with them (as they had leisure) in their administrations.

Rule and government is also common to the pastor and teacher with the elders, as by this place, 1 Tim. v. 17, expressly doth appear, in that he says in common, 'the elders that rule are worthy of double honour, but especially those that labour in the word and doctrine.' Therefore they that labour in word and doctrine are also ruling elders; and it is such a speech, as when it is said 'God is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe'; whence any man would gather that believers were men, only further, some

special rank of men; or as if it be said, Honour all fellows in a college, in the university, but especially those that labour in divinity. There is another place which proves the same thing, Heb. xiii. 7, so as their office is to do both, but yet they are, in common with another sort of officers, especially designed to that work mentioned, ver. 17.

Now this being premised, to find out the proper distinctions of each of these subordinate offices, these ensuing axioms, which fully agree with the apostle's intentions here and elsewhere, may give us light.

1. The first axiom is, that what is common to a superior officer with the inferior, may yet be made a proper difference of that inferior officer; as for example: To rule is an office common to pastors and elders, and yet to rule is made the special difference of such an officer in this, Rom. xii. 6, 7, as he is distinguished from deacons and prophets; for it is in this as it is in other species and kinds of creatures, who have something common, something proper. So as men have all that beasts and plants have; and yet when we would express the difference of a plant from a beast, we say it is a creature that hath life in it; when we would express the proper difference of a beast, we say, it is a creature that hath sense, a sensitive soul; and so of a man, we express his proper difference, a creature reasonable, though he hath sense also. And so the apostle, in this distinction of offices, distinguisheth a deacon by his office of giving, because this is all that the power of his office reacheth to; an elder by one that ruleth, because that is the highest that his office extends unto; and the pastor and doctor by prophesying, as that which alone is proper to them, though they rule, &c., also.

2. The second axiom is, that when that which is common to a superior officer with an inferior is made the difference of the inferior office, it is in respect of some peculiarity in that his work, which makes a true difference between them.

1. Thus, though to rule is a pastor's office as well as an elder's, yet the elder is more especially said to rule, because he is wholly set apart to it. It is his proper calling, which he is wholly appointed to mind, and in a special manner; and so the deacon's office is to mind the poor, they are separated to this work, so as to none else. That, as I said, all officers in common differ from private members, as being separated to some work, though withal they do besides retain in common with the rest of the members the exercise of all privileges and duties that belong to members; so it is in this respect in the comparison between the inferior and superior officers; though the superior in common performs the same works with the inferior, yet the inferior is set apart to it wholly, which the other is not, but to some other of a higher kind, by reason of intending which, he cannot so fully and wholly intend the other. And therefore it is observable, that speaking of a ruler's office in ruling, he says, let him do it with diligence; for that is his work which he is to mind, and there will be enough of it to fill his hand.

Or, 2, there may be a peculiar duty to be exercised by one more than another in the way of administration, and more peculiar bounds of jurisdiction in ruling. Thus the elders' ruling, and inspection, and watching, is only principally over men's lives, their outward man, the infirmities thereof in conversation; but the pastor's and teacher's care is over the inward principally, as their errors, temptations, doubts, scruples, &c. And the teacher also is more especially to admonish of errors, and pluck up such ill weeds as are contrary to sound doctrine; and the pastor to watch over the doubts about their estates, and slackness and deadness any way in holy duties; and accordingly the people are to make use of them, as they thus have in ruling their more special walks and works.

Or, 3, sometimes there is a difference in respect of eminency, that as a ruler's work is to admonish and watch over the life, so he may have a more special gift that way than a pastor or teacher.

3. The third axiom is, that in like manner the superior officers, pastor and teacher, have, besides those offices common with ruling elders, a special work, in which they are more eminent, and attend more upon it than ruling or on the deacon's office (though they are to mind them also), which is to prophesy and open the word; and accordingly, therefore, that gives them their distinction from the other.

1. Thus they are distinguished from deacons expressly, Acts vi. 1. The apostles, whose ordinary successors these are, gave over much of the business of looking to the poor, and established an office for it, to the end they might continually give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word, they being to be in public the mouth of God to the people, and of the people unto God.

Thus, 2, also, they are most properly distinguished from ruling elders, 1 Tim. v. 17. Those elders are such whose office it is to rule well, but these are they that labour in the word and doctrine; that is, that *ex officio* are to give themselves wholly up to it. To this purpose also may be observed that difference in Heb. xiii. 1; in the 7th verse, speaking of preaching elders or prophets, he says, 'Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God;' that is, that are openers of the word among you; and therefore he adds, 'whose faith follow,' and then at the 17th comes in, as a new exhortation, so another sort of elders (or else I suppose he would have shut up all in that order), of whom he mentions that they rule, but leaves out, as a note of difference, that which in the former he added, *that have spoken the word to you.* So as this is proper to these officers, and not communicated to the rest (not *ex officio*), to labour in the word and prophecy; and therefore, in Eph. iv. 11, 12, mentioning such officers as were appointed to gather the saints, and build them up in faith, and the knowledge of Christ by preaching, he mentions only pastors and doctors, and is silent of the other, as being the proper work of them, not of the other.

As I have shewed the proper difference of subordinate officers, it now remains that I should do the like concerning these two in the superior rank, pastor and teacher, which are co-ordinate, of which we must shew the difference also.

1. Some would have made the same difference of subordination between the pastor and teacher, that hath been shewn between them and the others, so as the pastor should be alone the supreme officer, and all the rest his assistants; and he should have also a larger power of administration and government, both in the sacraments and censures, from which they would exclude the teacher from meddling in them; but in any such respect, I cannot find in Scripture any so vast a difference, but every way an equality given to them, only a difference in the manner of administration.

1. There is only a difference as to the administration of holy things, not any thing as to power. For then the Scripture would mention also, that the pastor hath all the gifts the teacher hath, and more, for it is a law will not fail us, that eminency of power hath eminency of gifts, that fulness of power hath a fulness of gifts answerable; but God hath shared and divided gifts of prophesying between them, to one a word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, 1 Cor. xii. Not to the pastor solely, but so as the teacher is not his assistant but his compeer in it; and as their gifts, so their duties here, in Rom. xii., are bounded gifts, differing, ver. 6, so as the exhorter is

to attend on exhorting, as the teacher on teaching, and not to entrench on one another's office and duty, and so both to prophesy, κατὰ ἀναλογίαν πίστεως, as the Syriac translation hath it, *fidei suæ*, of his own faith; and then the meaning is not according only to the measure of his gift, more or less, for ἀναλογία respects quality rather than quantity, a likeness, a suitableness, and proportion therein according to the kind of his gifts, so as the meaning is, that all sermons and prophesying should be analogical to his gifts and office. As he hath gifts and an office of exhortation, so let him accordingly frame his sermons suitably; as we say of words (when proper), they are according to the analogy of a tongue, so here his ministry is according to the analogy of his gifts when suitable thereunto. A day of thanksgiving and humiliation differs, though there is no pre-eminence of holiness in the one afore the other, only some duties do *eminere* in the one more than in the other, as humiliation in the one, and thanksgiving in the other. And therefore, as a man may in a day of thanksgiving think of his sins, in order to raise up his heart to thankfulness, and in a day of humiliation mentions God's mercies to break his heart for his sins, yet so as the eminent duty is to be thanksgiving in the one, and humiliation in the other, so it is here in the administration of your gifts.

Neither, 2, is it that there are any holy things that a pastor may administer, that not a teacher; as to instance in the sacraments, wherein the difference must lie, if in anything.

1. The sacraments are committed promiscuously to the apostles, and their successors in teaching *ex officio:* Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go and teach, and baptize.'

2. Both are alike stewards of the mysteries of God, which elders are not, 1 Cor. iv. 1.

3. Both may bless, and do, as in praying afore sermons, so in preaching the gospel; and it is called the fulness of the blessing of the gospel which a teacher in teaching brings, Rom. xvi., as well as the sacrament is called the cup of blessing.

And, 4, though the sacraments are the seals of the covenant that apply Christ, and so might seem peculiar to the pastor's office, yet they are signs also for teaching, and belong therefore to the teachers to administer. As therefore such truths as are mixed belong to them both to preach, so the administration of the sacraments too; for they shew forth Christ's death till he come, as well as the word, Gal. iii. 1, 2, and they preach to the eye that which the gospel doth to the ear.

5. Teaching is a higher ordinance than the sacrament: 1 Cor. i. 7, 'I was not sent to baptize, but preach;' therefore he that, *ex officio*, doth the greater and more important may perform the lesser.

3. They are equal in respect of honour due to them, 1 Tim. v. 17, where his scope is to give every office its due honour; therefore of widows, and so of deacons, who are of the same rank, he had said, 'Honour them who are widows indeed'; of ruling elders, a superior office, he hath doubled it, appointing double honour to him that rules well. But to those that labour in the word (of wisdom or exhortation), the pastor, or in doctrine, the teacher, he especially assigns double honour, and to both the same, whereas, if the pastor had been so superior (his scope being to shew what honour was due to each according to their administration), he would have said, Give to your pastor more especial honour of all the rest. He doth not intend any precedency, for he promiscuously ranks the one afore the other, and *è contra*, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, as Eph. iv. 12, pastors afore teachers, so here teachers afore pastors, and sometimes teachers for to ex-

press both, and that more ordinarily than the other, as Gal. vi. 6, 1 Cor. xii. 28, 1 Tim. iii., and Titus i. Nor doth he mean that there is an excellency in the ministries of one above the other, that as all ordinances excel other in something, so it is here, for when all is in order both come to one. The one is the tutor of the understanding, the other of the will; these are their two pupils committed to them. And when that controversy in philosophy is decided, which is noblest of those two faculties, then may this of these two offices.

But they differ,

1. In respect of an eminency of gifts inclining one way rather than another. It is said of all prophesying elders, Titus i. 9, that they are to be able both to exhort and convince gainsayers by sound doctrine, so as the pastor is to use a word of doctrine, and so a teacher a word of exhortation; but that which is *eminere*, or to shine forth in their preaching, is their special gift. It is not to be thought that a pastor is to speak only in a way of application and use, for he should have a doctrine as a ground to plant his great ordnance upon, which he dischargeth. Nor is it that the teacher is to leave his doctrines altogether without application; but that his gift is suited to his office, and so his labour is to be most spent in doctrine; and so the words of the text are to be understood, Let him that teacheth be as in teaching, that is, most employed about it.

2. They differ but *modaliter*, in the manner of handling their ministry. The one turns all his sermons into applications, by way of comfort and exhortation, the other endeavours to inform the judgment; they differ but as logic and rhetoric, which are compared to a shut hand and one opened; the same arguments are used in both, but the one so ordered as to convince the judgment, the other so as to persuade the affection.

More particularly they differ,

1. In the several subjects they are to deal with. Both look to the inward man. So they differ from the elders, who look to the outward; but those share the two noble faculties between them: the one the understanding, the other the will and conscience; the one hath more peculiarly the understanding to deal with, the other the will and affections. These are their pupils committed to their charge; men are ignorant, and apt to err, and need to be built up in knowledge. This the teacher takes care of, to feed with knowledge and understanding, as Jer. iii. 16, and xxiii. 3, 4, and chap. vi. 8. And men are slow of heart to do, and need quickening and stirring up; for this the pastor's office serves, Eccles. xii. 11. There is need of nails to rivet and fasten truths on their understanding, and establish them in them; and there is need of goads to provoke them unto good works, Heb. x. 23. And there are feeble arms, and hands that hang down, that are to be strengthened; inward evils, discouragements which are to be removed, &c.; which to do is the pastor's office.

2. They differ in the object matter. The one speaks words of knowledge, and considers truths, and shews the story and harmony of them, teacheth in faith and verity, as 1 Tim. ii. 7, or as Rom. ii. 20; is an instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, and has a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law; the other is to consider men, and speak words of wisdom pertinently to them. The one hath the Bible, and the system or form of wholesome words for his text; the other studies men more, and seeks to fit the word to them. And the pastor is one able to discern what is peculiarly fit for men's spirits, and so speaks wisely to men, whereas the other speaks pertinently to truths. The one brings scripture to scripture, and compares each with each; the other deals and divides the word, and brings Scripture and men's con-

sciences together. You may discern this difference in men's conferences: some, when they speak, consider the occasion of the party; some follow still the occasion the discourse giveth.

3. They differ in respect of truths. The pastor deals with points of practice more, with things to be done; the other with points of faith, with things to be believed. Some truths are mixed, and in those both are alike to deal, as in cases of conscience and scruples of conscience.

4. To express it by the method of preaching in use with us: whereas sermons consist of doctrines and uses, so the gifts of the one lies more in explaining the words and phrases, and to bring reasons to confirm and to solve doubts, and resolve mysteries; and so succeed these prophets under the New Testament, who opened harder places and difficulties. The other is more fit to enlarge into uses, and to digest all truths into practical thoughts, which with power he can set home on the heart.

5. The pastor deals with men's sins more, the teacher with men's errors more; the one in information, the other in mortification. The one hath more of Christ's priestly office, in slaying the old man, and offering up believers as a sacrifice to Christ, Rom. xv. 16; the other hath Christ's prophetical office more imported, in opening truths, as the elder hath more of Christ's kingly office in ruling over men's consciences.

Use 1. See the goodness of God, who hath made such abundant provision for all defects. As he hath fitted gifts to offices, so both to the needs of men, 1 Cor. xii. 21, which implies that God in placing the members respected the need of the whole, as *natura non deficit in necessariis, neque gratia.* Look what the inward man wants, preaching officers are to provide for, and all the several parts of it, and what is defective in the outward man, the elders are to watch over; and accordingly we see, as ministers are thus eminently gifted, so people are eminently fitted to them. Some are quickened more by an affectionate way, and cleave to such a ministry; some by a doctrinal way, and are built up by notions and knowledge; that so all tastes may be suited, and all have their portion.

Use 2. There is a rule for churches in their choice, to rank men into offices according to their gifts. This you are to heed, for you choose not for yourselves, but for the Lord (as he said, you judge for the Lord). The apostle says, Acts xiv. 23, the Holy Ghost made them overseers; yet they were called by men, and set over his church purchased by his blood, over a flock which God accounts so precious. You are not therefore to choose out of any ends of common prudence, but for spiritual ends, merely comparing spiritual things with spiritual, to suit men and places accordingly. There is simony in by-ends. In other choices they use to give oaths, as in colleges and in corporations, but here there is none but conscience to be a tie upon you.

That which now remains is to establish the truth of these several offices here mentioned, because it is denied by many (as you know) that there are such, or so many differing officers to be in churches; denying that there is such a difference between the office of pastor and teacher, and that under those two names one only kind of officer is meant, in respect of a differing action to be performed by him, and so that there are several works, not persons; and then again, wholly taking away the office of the ruling elder, as neither necessary nor any way the institution of Christ.

I will first therefore, in general, argue out of this place of Rom. xii. 6–8.

1. That in this place officers, and not actions or duties of members, are spoken of is evident, 1, in that he mentions διακονία, or *ministry*, which is the name of an office, not of an action of any private member.

2. In that he says, *he that ruleth*, he must needs note out an office, for otherwise one brother is not to rule over another, or to take upon him to do it.

3. In that he speaks of them as of such callings as men are to exercise themselves in, which is proper for officers to do. Now so he speaks of them, for that he calls for diligence of a ruler; it is ἐν σπουδῇ, which, as Boetius defines it, is, *vehemens animi intentio ad id quod suscipitur*, a vehement intention of mind to that which is undertaken, so as to mind it and employ one's self in it, as in a calling and employment designed there, which also that phrase ἐν διακονίᾳ implies, 'He that ministereth in ministering, that teacheth on teaching.' That phrase *to be in* notes out making it one's calling; for so, 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16, speaking to Timothy to perform the work of an evangelist, he says, 'Give thyself wholly to them, and be in them,' ver. 16, as the word is in the original; and in that also he useth such participles to express it, as exhortations *in docendo, in exhortando*, it implies a calling, and not an action, for otherwise it were a tautology; for if he meant an action only, then to say, he that teacheth, teach, were a tautology. So as the one notes out *jus et nomen officii*, the other, the exercise of his office. To say, let him that seeth, see, is a tautology; but to say, let the seer see, he whose office it is, is to call upon him to do his duty by reason of his office; so as the one, *he that teacheth*, notes out *jus et potentiam*, the other, *in teaching*, notes *praxin*, the exercise of it.

4. Those who oppose this congregational way have none to teach or exhort, but those that are in office, or orders, as they call it.

5. Though he call them gifts, yet so officers are called, Eph. iv. 3. The apostles' office he calls χάρις; 'I say,' says he, 'through the grace given me,' that is, my apostolical power and office, as was shewed afore.

And, 2, ordinary officers are meant.

1. Because the gifts and actions he speaks of are ordinary, such as no extraordinary gifts are required for the performance of, as to teach, or exhort, to give, &c., which actions and gifts remain still in the church.

And, 2, because even the prophets here (which, if any, might seem extraordinary) are limited to the analogy of faith, and all exhorted not to entrench upon others' callings or actions; which bounds, if they had been extraordinary officers, they could not have set to them.

Now then, 3, if officers and officers ordinary be here meant, then look how many several enumerations there are, so many several offices are there too. For else,

1. The scope of his former general exhortation, that they should not entrench upon one another's functions, had been made utterly void if several offices and actions had not been intended.

And, 2, because he had spoken of diversity, ver. 46, therefore these enumerations must be understood as instances of that diversity.

And, 4, if pastors and deacons were differing, then why not all? There is the same reason for the one as for the other; and therefore why should not he that teacheth be differing from him that exhorteth, as well as from him that giveth or ruleth? And in that Eph. iv., pastor and doctor, and 1 Cor. xii, teachers, and helpers, and governors, are reckoned up amongst the extraordinary, it argues that in an ordinary way there is the like necessity of them, that in an extraordinary there was of the other. I shall speak more particularly of the difference and distinction of the offices of pastor and teacher.

1. It appears that these offices are distinct in that place, Eph. iv. 11; we find pastors and deacons* enumerated.

* Qu. 'teachers'?—ED.

Obj. Against this place is objected, that it is spoken exegetically, pastors and teachers as making up all one office.

1. But then he would have said rather, pastors *or* teachers, not *and* teachers.

2. But Καὶ doth not always lock together, but sometimes differenceth two things it is set betwixt, as in the like case Acts xiii. 1, 'prophets *and* teachers.' By prophets he means, in the language of the primitive times, extraordinary gifts, but teachers were ordinary; and Barnabus and Saul, who were extraordinary men, are there reckoned.

And, 3, in all exegetical speeches, the latter explains the former, and useth to be more clear; but after *pastors* in that sense that is held (this being the proper name of the office) to say, *i. e. teachers*, is to explain the more proper by the improper.

Obj. But to all the rest there is a note of difference affixed, as when he says, 'some apostles, some evangelists;' but of these pastors and teachers there is none, so as it seems they were intended as one.

Ans. But it is the manner of the Grecians to bring in the word Καὶ, *and*, in the end of a disjunctive enumeration, in a disjunctive sense, as in that Gal. iii. 21, after he had said, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free,' he ends that last disjunction, 'neither male or female.' In Greek it is, neither male *and* female;' so in the original, and the Syriac so reads it.

And, 2, as their offices are thus here, and in that place, thus distinct, so their gifts also are distinct; and this is a rule infallible, that according to diversity of gifts hath God appointed diversity of offices. He suited gifts and offices together, so 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5. There are diversities of gifts and diversities of administrations, so as they are commensurable. Now in the same place, when, ver. 8, he enumerates the variety of gifts, to one, says he, is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge.

1. He speaks of preachers that speak the word, which differenceth them from elders; for he calls it a word of knowledge, and a word of wisdom.

2. He speaks of ordinary officers, for as Beza observes, when he begins to speak of extraordinary gifts, in the next word he varies the phrase, ἑτέρῳ πίστις, ver. 9. And they differ, as *prudentia* and *scientia* in philosophy, many men knowing things in the notion, that are not so wise to discern of men and things, and to apply accordingly. And according to what the Holy Ghost hath said here of the variety of men's gifts, we find nothing more evident in experience, even in a church, where there is a distinction of offices; yet God still kept to his rule, and distributed gifts accordingly. Some apt to open things more largely, others to apply them; yea, the papists did observe this difference of gifts, as is evident in their comparing Thomas Aquinas and Bonventure together: *Thomas intellectu eminuit, Bonaventura affectu splenduit;* the one was a more understanding, judicious divine, the other more affectionate and eminent to stir up affection. And even in the natural parts of men, there is that difference: some are fit positively to explain and convince, but cannot persuade; others are more fit to persuade and prevail with men. And thereby do ordinary officers differ from those extraordinary, that both meet in these; so in Timothy, but are differing in those other.

3. As there are differing gifts, so differing works, to a differing end. Prophesying elders are distinguished from ruling, by labouring in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17, for the great labour is that of the mind. By *word*, some particularly understand a word of exhortation, as here distinct from doctrine or teaching: so Heb. xiii. 22, 'Suffer the word of exhortation;' and Acts xiii. 15, 'If any have a word of exhortation,' &c. And *doctrine*,

on the contrary, is taken for the form of truth and wholesome words, which is taught especially by the teacher, as, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, doctrine is taken. And as here they are called both prophets, so according to those ends of prophesying mentioned, 1 Cor. xiv. 3, may their distinction here be illustrated. Prophesying, he says, is a speaking to edification, to exhortation, to comfort. If edification be taken in a strict sense, as distinct from comfort and exhortation (though I confess elsewhere, and in the next verses, it is taken largely), then it notes out building up in knowledge, which is the teacher's work, and exhortation and comfort, the pastor's. The teacher prophesieth to edification, and the exhorter to exhortation and comfort. And therefore it is observable, that the word used here, παρακαλεῖν, is either to comfort or to exhort.

4. By this distribution of officers, there is a communication of all the offices of Christ.

(1.) The pastor represents the priestly office of Christ. For he, by the word applied, slays the old man, and presents the new creature to God.

(2.) The teacher represents the prophetical office of Christ.

(3.) The kingly office of Christ is more eminently seen in the ruling elder.

5. This suits with all the needs of a church: their understandings are the teacher's pupils; their wills, the pastor's; their lives, the charge of the elders. And accordingly, we see believers appeal, some to doctrinal preaching, some to exhortation. And thus ranked were the ministers in the primitive times: there were two prophesying elders, at least, in a church, Col. iv. 18. Archippus had a ministry he was to fulfil, and that surely a teaching one; for their other minister, Epaphras, who was also their minister, Col. i. 1, was then absent, Col. iv. 12. More besides they might have, and a church may have, as Acts xiii. 1. They had many teachers in one church; and as Musculus observes on Rom. xii., he says, all have not the same office, not that none have the same. The body, to which the comparison is, hath two eyes, two hands, &c.; there was something in it, that Christ, in sending forth the apostles, sent them two by two. So Cyprian in his time says, you that are pastors with the elders, doctors, and readers, &c. So in the church of Alexandria, Origen was a doctor.

The German divines make this office proper to universities, and professors there, but the apostle makes the officer a member of the church, and for all saints, Eph. iv. and Rom. xii. So in our cathedrals, there remains a *vestigium*, a footstep of this distinction, in that we have, as bishops, so also readers in cathedrals; and in the same church there are vicars and pastors.

CHAPTER IX.

That a pastor and teacher, and many other officers of a particular church, have the promise of a special blessing from God.—That accordingly they do receive such a special blessing, suited to the rank and order of their office, to give success in the execution of it, beyond what a mere preacher can expect.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, &c.—Ps. CXXXIII. 1–3.

There is one thing which I cannot pretermit, but must urge and press it, viz., that every institution, and office, and order appointed by God, hath answerably to accompany it, and succeed it, a special blessing suited to the

nature of it. This is evident from this, Ps. cxxxiii. 1–3. It is common to the New Testament, though spoken of the assemblies of the Old Testament, either of the lesser synagogues, or of the general assemblies at their feasts, for they were under their high priests, to whom he does allude: ver. 2, 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.' Every member partook of some benefit of the holy oil poured upon Aaron's head, the chief officer of those general assemblies; and it is expressly added of them there, that God commands the blessing. And this, though an Old Testament instance, may fitly serve for the New, *mutatis mutandis*. For a particular church, where the brethren meet in one ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτο, and ὁμοθυμαδὸν, with one consent, one heart, one worship, is in itself alone a distinct special ordinance and institution of Christ; and he hath promised, that 'where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst amongst them,' Mat. xviii. 20. And his presence brings all sorts of blessings with it, and there it is that God commands a blessing. For that company are the house of God, 1 Tim. iii. 15, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth; ἑδράιωμα, the seat of truth, a pillar of truth, not architectonically, that supported the truth, but forenically, as pillars use to be, with papers pasted on them to declare the truth. It is an ordinance to preserve truth in the world, to hold it forth, as on pillars they used to place their writings. God is used to bless the small, despised assemblies of saints gathered together in unity, more than great councils, consisting of popes, and bishops, and cardinals. These small assemblies have been the little creepers in the chimney, that keep up the fires, which the great andirons do not, as was Prince Henry's speech. And a church, though very small, is yet a church of the living God; and, as Mr Nye once well said, a church is a thing that lives, because it has the living God to dwell in it.

And as God blesseth the churches that are the casket, the sheath, so he blesseth their officers too that are proper to them, though among men accounted the lowest, that is, they are pastors and teachers in particular congregations, who are their preaching elders.

The papists plead that it is their church that keep the faith and the truth, and that God has made a promise to lead them into all truth. But it is the ordinary officers of the church, pastors and teachers, which the apostle Paul says do build up the church, 'till they come to the unity of the faith,' Eph. iv. 11–13. And it is among you he has commanded the blessing; which is demonstrated thus, that Christ, when he ascended, gave gifts unto men, and scattered them among the saints, *tanquam missilia*, as the Roman emperors did their donatives among the people, as their chariots went along. Now, what were these gifts but the offices which God instituted in the church universal; first, the extraordinary, that ceased before Tertullian's time, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and there are no more of them to be found on earth, only their writings continue, and make up the New Testament. But who are the lasting officers of continuance, to preserve the truths when they were gone? None but pastors and teachers; and unto these it has been that the faith hath been committed, and by them preserved, and truth hath been taught; and how long do they last? Till all come to the unity of the faith of the Son of God. If any point of faith be erred in that is not fundamental, these pastors and teachers do restore it unto its primitive native splendour. It is there God appoints the blessing, whatever men pretend of general councils; and the reason is, because God still follows his own institutions with his own blessing, and there God commands a blessing. As Christ himself did ascend from the lower parts of the earth unto that

height which he has in heaven, so doth all truths arise from the lower sort of ministers; and if general councils have any truth among them, it is because it hath ascended first unto them, from the inferior lower sort of ministers, as they in debasement call them.

That, in general, a special blessing from God is promised to all assemblies and institutions, whether of the Old or New Testament, is evinced from this one place which I have mentioned, Ps. cxxxiii. 1–3, where a blessing is so emphatically declared: 'There God commands a blessing,' which denotes the intention of God's mind in it. Now to whom and to what is this super-excellent blessing, even eternal life, which is the sum and quintessence of blessing, commanded to be bestowed? Under the Old Testament the promise of eternal life was then given; witness that one scripture, speaking of the Old Testament worship by the twelve tribes: 'To which promise,' says the apostle, 'the twelve tribes,' meaning the nation of the godly Jews, 'hoping to come, served God day and night.' Their assemblies were either the general assemblies or feasts, at which the high priest, the greatest officer of the Old Testament, and the type of Christ, was present, or else the lesser assemblies of the synagogues, and all the order and institutions belonging to them. And all this blessing was promised to each and every of them. And their holy communion together in the general assemblies, the psalmist compares unto the pouring down the holy oil upon the head of the high priest; and as the oil dropped down upon all his garments, the skirts, &c., so every particular member likewise they exhorted 'to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' These are the unities of the New Testament, that the saints are exhorted to live in also, and above all to avoid divisions; they are called to peace in one body, and every particular church is called the house of the living God, dwelling together with them to keep them in unity. And Christ's first institution of a particular church under the New Testament expresses it on this wise again: 'I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree upon earth,' &c., Mat. xviii. 19. There is unity, and 'as touching any thing they shall ask of my Father which is in heaven,' says Christ, 'it shall be done unto them'; and then adds the words of institution, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them.' They therefore who are present receive a participation of the blessings promised, of some of the holy oil poured upon Christ the head.

2. Secondly, this scripture, though written under the Old Testament, is yet, *mutatis mutandis*, readily applicable to the new constituted assemblies of the saints under the gospel, and even the terms and the language used in the Psalm is fitted to those of the New Testament. As, for instance, the word *brethren dwelling together*, is the proper cognisance of the community of the saints assembled under the New. Those words, *dwelling together in unity*, is well nigh the same; for they dwell in churches under pastors and teachers, and are instructed till they all come to 'the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God.' And where Christ's presence is, there is always a blessing; and it is also a description of a New Testament church, 1 Cor. xiv. 23. That it is a whole church, consisting of all its members 'met together in one place,' there is unity of place. And then, Acts i. 14, we have an account that they met with one consent (ὁμοθυμαδὸν) to perform the duties of worship. And whoever will read the story of the first New Testament church that God reared in Jerusalem, will find abundantly enough in the story of the first chapter of the Acts, and in the second chapter, concerning their continuing together in one place, 'they were all with one accord in one place,' chap. ii. 1; and there was fulfilled the prophecies of Joel, in pouring out the Spirit of God upon them, which inwardly

united them together. And Jesus Christ his presence was amongst them; and he being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, was in the midst of them. And he being the High Priest of the New Testament, Heb. iii. 1, God hath anointed him, of which anointing we have all participated, Acts iv. ver. 27. Nor did they only continue together in the apostles' fellowship in the temple, and in Solomon's porch, in preaching, in prayers, and in breaking bread (as in those chapters is mentioned), but it grew to such a unity that 'the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any one that aught of the things he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all,' Acts iv. 32, 33. For that time they keep as a day of thanksgiving, and continual feasting unto the Lord, for the joy they had that their new King was alive and risen. So those other words of the psalmist, 'Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,' were then verified in such a manner, and with such a joy, as had never been seen afore in the world at any time, insomuch as the common Jews that were not believers, nor of their company, beheld and magnified them; 'praising God, and having favour with all the people,' Acts ii. 47. *Ecce quam invicem diligunt*, Behold how they love one another, was the common cry of the multitude, thus plausibly and happily did this church begin, 'and great grace was upon them all,' Acts iii. 33; they were joined or glued together, as the word is. And thus blessed from God was the first seat and pillar of truth, not architectonical, or a pillar that bore up the truth, but forenical, whereby, according to the custom of those times, the holy mysteries of God and Christ were posted, to be seen and read of all. And thus much in general to prove that there is a blessing from God in a gospel church, truly gathered and constituted by God, where Christ is present.

2. And if the case, the sheath, the cabinet be thus precious to God, then the gifts which God places in his cabinet, I mean the instituted officers of this church, which are the furniture and ornament of it, are also precious unto God, and ought to be unto us; and that which I insist on is, that each of them have a special blessing from God to accompany them as a gift from God, and special blessing. And indeed the officers duly placed and fixed in this seat of truth, have been in all ages since Christ the great preservers and restorers of gospel truth, and to whom we owe the glorious reformation of our religion.

The papists make a great plea of the church's infallibility and authority through God's blessing, as they pretend; but when we come to examine what that church is, that is the preserver of truth, they cry up the higher clergy (as they call it) of popes, patriarchs, bishops, and such like doctors of the higher rank. But it is reported to have been Prince Henry's speech and similitude (eldest son to King James the First), that being invited to a merchant's house, where a great pair of brass andirons were, these gaudy appearances of shining brass (says he) are not the pillars that hold up the fire, as your bishops and doctors are not, but they are the little creepers of iron which bear up the fire. So it is not your prelates which uphold the church, but it is your inferior ministers, which take pains in their places, that uphold it, and not general councils nor the dignified clergy. In Eph. iv. 11, 12, it is said of pastors and teachers, that they are the only standing officers of the church whom Jesus Christ hath continued in the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ through every age, which their succession does run

through, till we all come in the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, every such age by the instructions of these ordinary ministers preserving the knowledge of Christ and unity of faith. Now, what is the reason that the people of God should be built up by these means, rather than by pompous ostentation of knowledge, but only because indeed God's blessing follows his own ordination; and apostles and evangelists being ceased and gone off the stage, and only their writings in the New Testament left, God produces an oral propagating down of these truths among his elect by these ordinary pastors.

And these and the like blessings Jesus Christ hath freely bestowed, as special gifts and donatives of grace, so as the gift of them is in itself a singular blessing to any people that enjoys them; and besides, God follows the person with a special blessing and endowment, together with his gift and ability, according to the rank and order of the office itself, which is also the gift in that Eph iv., before quoted. He rehearseth all sorts of instituted officers in the church, whether ordinary or extraordinary, as for preaching the extraordinary: ver. 11, 'He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists.' These are the twelve stars about the church's head, Rev. xii. 1, wherewith the primitive age was crowned, but they have ever since disappeared, only leaving their writings; and they ceasing in respect of living, the Christian world began anew, were children rather than fathers, there being few preaching elders that had gifts of ability, as may be discerned by their writings they have left. But the ordinary standing ministers were pastors and teachers, and to them Christ committed the instruction of the church. Now concerning them you may observe two things for our present purpose.

1. They were special gifts of Jesus Christ, and superadded graces out of grace were bestowed on men, and such as might somewhat exceed the common sort of believers, being first instructed from the extraordinary: 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'And the things thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'

2. Christ having all power committed unto him in heaven and earth, appointed two distinct offices of preaching elders, investing them with his authority and in his name suitably.

3. He, by special solemnities of his appointment, set and separated them to those offices with fasting and prayer.

4. He gave a special blessing to each office and officer in the execution of his office, for the people's sake over whom he is placed.

And when he had made up and compounded an office or officer with all these particulars, he then gave them as a gift and donative of mere grace, and has scattered them as *missilia* among the people, according to his good pleasure. I call them so, alluding to the name which the Romans gave to the pieces of gold and silver which their emperors ordered to be cast amongst the people. This our Lord Jesus doth from heaven himself, withal blessing them, for our Lord and Saviour Christ, when he was to ascend to heaven in the sight of the five hundred that were present, 1 Cor. xv. 6, he then singled out his apostles and other ministers whom he had appointed in his lifetime, and had sent them two and two: Mat. xxviii. 18–20, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth;' and upon that he sounds their commissions: 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;' for that was spoken only of ministers, 'Go and baptize,' &c., which was only proper for ministers, who are the only stewards of the mysteries of God, and so of baptism, being a sacrament and seal of the covenant. And Christ also adds this for them, 'Teaching

them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.' And when he had given them this authority and gifts to teach all nations, he promises to be with them to the end of the world; and the last thing he did was to bless them: Luke xxiv. 50, 51, 'And he lift up his hands and blessed them: and it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.' And this he did in analogy to what God did in the first creation, when he had made the first man and woman: Gen. i. 28, 'And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply.' And thus Christ did in his new creation of ministers, whether extraordinary, as in the first times, or ordinary, which are to endure to the end of the world; and upon all inferior or lower ministers, and on all officers of his church to come, in their several degrees, he commands the blessing, which still continues, and we act and are acted in the virtue of it.

Thus I have proved that Jesus Christ hath himself solemnly blessed these institutions of the offices of preaching ministers, and that he did it just as he was going to heaven.

2. I shall now demonstrate more expressly that every ministerial office hath a blessing to accompany it, according to its order and institution, which will yet more confirm that these two particular offices we have instanced, of pastor and teacher, have certainly the blessing commanded to them; for if every officer else hath it, then much more these, which are very noble, Rom. xv. 29, in their employment and usefulness to man. If we want this completeness, we shall find we shall fall so much short of the blessing; but the apostle says that he came to the Romans in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, so we are to take care that we do not miss of some degree of that blessing which the fulness of the institution will bring with it.

I proceed to demonstrate this truth by a view of particular offices which God has instituted, and with them each hath appointed a particular blessing or benefit, or issue, and event thereof.

As for the Old Testament, I will give but one instance (but to me it is a great one), to evidence the thing in hand: Lev. ix. 23, 'And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people.' Yea, when the ordinary Levites and priests blessed the people, their voice was heard: 2 Chron. xxx. 27, 'Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven.' And as it had its effect in the heart of God, so the blessing of the high priest had a strange and miraculous effect in the heart of a poor woman. How much was poor Hannah's heart loaded and made unquiet by her fellow-partner Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife! the story doth pitifully and mournfully set it out: 1 Sam. i. 6, 'And her adversary provoked her sore for to make her fret;' and then poor Hannah, ver. 10, was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore; but when Eli blessed her, saying, ver. 17, 'Go in peace, and the Lord God of Israel grant thee thy petition, that thou hast asked of him,' ver. 18, then the woman went her way, and her countenance was no more sad.

In the New Testament, if we examine from the lowest office of the church to the highest, there is a peculiar blessing promised according to the degree, rank, or order of the institution.

1. A deacon is esteemed the lowest office, but the discharging of it well hath a special encouragement, in comparison of what other common Christians have: 1 Tim. iii. 13, 'For they that have used the office of a deacon

well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.' A good degree, that is, they obtain, as a reward to themselves, an estimation above the rank of ordinary believers in the faith, and great boldness thereupon. And in ver. 11, likewise the women γυναῖκας, viz., deaconesses (so Grotius renders it, and not wives) who were to tend the sick, must be grave, sober, faithful in all things; and Christ will be faithful to them to reward them according to their deservings. Thus it is in the lowest offices in the church. If we ascend to the highest, which was the order of apostles in the church, there were several things concurred in an apostle, as to have been conversant with Christ during the time of his walking upon earth, and then to have been eye-witnesses of his resurrection after his death; but the principal eminent thing, that had the blessing to convert souls wherever they came, and had the great success in that their ministry, was by virtue of the very office itself. For when our Saviour Christ sent out his twelve apostles, he furnished them with two things.

1. With the matter which they should preach. They were directed to preach the kingdom of God, and so to work upon men's souls.

2. Christ furnished them with authority and power extraordinary, Mat. x. 1, to heal the sick, cleanse the leper, &c. Now this is my assertion, that it was not only the gift of ability to preach, but the authority and power which they were invested with, wherein lay their apostleship and their universal commission to go over all, or to any nation, and preach the gospel with success. In the virtue of this office it was, that the blessing did accompany them wherever they went; and from thence it was that God wrought so with them as he did. It was by virtue of the office itself which he had placed them in, and environed them about with the power of God. What says Paul, Gal. ii. 6, 7, concerning his own and Peter's apostleship? That when they saw, by different experiences, and by conference of us together, the various working of God in the ministry by me and by them, they knew that the gospel of uncircumcision was committed to me, as the gospel of circumcision was to Peter. Now this arose not from the different abilities of Peter and Paul, but from the various commission and success that their office and apostleship had in it from God. It was not that Paul was more abundantly laborious in the ministry than them all, that his gospel ran like wildfire upon seared trees in a torrid zone: Rom. xv. 19, 'Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum' (that is, all along as far as Hungary), 'I have fully preached the gospel.' And it was not the knowledge of his own ability he presumed on, but the authority God had put him into by his office, and he, in a holy kind of ambition in doing this, scorned to build upon another's foundation, as in ver. 20, 'Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.'

And it was chiefly the conscience of that office of apostleship which God had placed him in, and that success to an admiration that God accompanied him with, which did thrust out that holy boast of his: 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'But I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' And this I boldly interpret, that he speaks it not of the grace of God that was in himself, but of the grace of God that was with him, and so speaks of his office which God had put him into, as in ver. 9, 'For I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of Christ. But by the grace of God I am what I am.' He speaks not of the grace he received at his conversion to Christianity, but of that of his apostleship, which I speak not to provoke to pains, that is un-

reasonable, but to shew that the success ever he had from God in it provoked him unto it. It was not the grace of his conversion he thanked God for, but that of his apostleship, as in 1 Tim. i. 12–18, 'I was a persecutor and a blasphemer, and yet he put me into the ministry,' &c. He seems to thank God for that in the first and chief place, and Rom xi. 13, 'For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office.'

By the way, Mr Parker, in his *Ecclesiastical Policy*, has a controversy with the bishops about this, viz., to which of Christ's offices ministers owe their original for the ministry. They say they hold it from him as priest, chiefly for their honour, but the apostle Paul attributes it to his being king. He is the great sovereign, that works all things and does all things, and yet he is invisible, which is his glory, and so Jesus Christ founds it on his kingly office: 'All power in heaven and on earth is given to me' (says he), and so 'go and teach all nations,' &c., Mat. xxviii. 18, 20. But here, the wonder may be that the privilege of being put into the ministry should be called by him grace, but the apostle has prevented us in our wonder at it in Rom. i. 5, 'By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name,' which he accordingly urges them unto upon every occasion; 'according as we have received grace,' says he, 'we exhort you, &c. Now, would you think it? he styles every standing office in the church a *grace*, or *the grace of God*, in like manner as he had done the apostleship: Eph. iii. 7, 'Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power.' In like manner he calls every particular office in the church instituted, a *grace* from God: Rom. xii. 4, 6, 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.' And then he enumerates the standing instituted offices as pastor, and so downwards to the very tenders of the sick. 'He that sheweth mercy,' says he, 'let him do it with cheerfulness.' And as he calls these offices gifts, so he calls it grace to be so called into such offices, even as he had called the apostleship the gift of grace unto himself, and so there is in their proportion the like blessing and obligation.

It is strange that all that perfect holiness that Adam had before his fall should be called the image of God, and yet it arose not to the dignity and style of being called grace, which denotes something supernatural above the due of creation.

Because in Rom. xii. 6, 7, two standing offices are in common named prophesying and teaching, in distinction from the lower offices, I shall upon the occasion thereof argue the point in hand, namely, that the two preaching elders being made officers, and their calling being to prophesy, that they have a special blessing promised, answerably to their institution. To explain which more distinctly, we may and must know that prophesying, in the language of Paul's epistles, is used to express the preaching of members who are not officers, and yet have gifts fit to edify the church, which the apostle therefore allows, 1 Cor. xiv.; but so as this kind of prophesying was not to hinder the church from having standing elders of preaching, for that other kind of exercise of prophesying from the members is to be voluntary and occasional, as the Spirit of God supplies them with new matter. But Jesus Christ, Head of the church, thought not fit to leave his church to such an uncertain, slender provision only. But as he is rich in mercy, so he would have his word to dwell richly and plentifully in his house; and has therefore appointed officers that should preach in season and out of season, that should give themselves wholly up to these things, to make it their work and business

to seek, to find out, pleasant words, as of Solomon it is said, Eccles. xii. 10. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, our founder, is a great king, and will have his children nobly educated, by men whose office it is to tend them, as princes have; yea, he has appointed and set tutors over every faculty of his people, teachers to inform their understandings, pastors and exhorters to deal with their wills and affections, and those lower than they to take care about their bodies for sickness or poverty. 'This is a faithful saying, He that desires the office of a bishop, desireth a good work;' and of these the apostle says, they are 'worthy of double honour,' 1 Tim. v. 17. To whom doth he speak it, but to these other mentioned that are out of office, who are to have but single honour in comparison of those other, who are the stars in Christ's right hand, firm and fixed in their orbs?

And here it will not be improper nor impertinent to shew the procedure and degrees, but especially the outward course and means, that God took to bring the apostle Paul's apostleship to this perfection and height of consummation. But especially it is for us to consider the outward means and course God took therein.

First, The foundation of his apostleship was founded upon Christ's calling him in so extraordinary a manner, who prophesied of him aforehand that he was a chosen vessel, and that he would send him as a witness of him among the Gentiles, so at his conversion. Then for three years he lived in Arabia, during which time (as Bishop Ussher happily conjectures) God took an occasion to make known his whole gospel to him, both in the centre and circumference of all the truths of it, and their coherence one with another. And though God was able speedily to reveal, yet Paul was to take all in, and that required time. Now, after God had filled and furnished Paul's heart and head with all kind of matter to enable him to preach, after this you read of his preaching up and down to the Jews, but unknown by face to them, Gal. i. 22; and then he went to Tarshish, his own city, from whence Barnabas fetched him and brought him to Antioch. And there it was that Paul received an outward mission and commission to be an apostle to the Gentiles. And it was by the ordinary course and means of laying on of hands, with fasting and prayer for him, which is an example for our encouragement in our being put into the ministry, to receive a blessing in the use of that ordinary means. The story is, Acts xiii., the elders of the church at Antioch being met, and having fasted, 'The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.'

Now, Paul writing to the Romans, citizens of the head city of the Gentiles, refers, Rom. i. 1, to the words of this story, and to that mission of him recorded in that story, in using the very words, as glorying in that style which he counted the foundation of his apostleship among the Gentiles. 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them,' says the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 'Separated unto the gospel of God,' says the apostle, Rom. i. 1. 'We have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.' And from thence in the rest of the epistle, and in this epistle to the Corinths, he urgeth obedience to his apostolical authority in such words as those, 'according as we have received grace,' viz., grace of apostleship, as he interprets it, do so and so, as we have commanded. This is frequent too in the epistles to the Corinthians, and in this to the Romans: chap. xi. 13, 'For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.' Eph. iii. 3, 'Whereof,' viz., of the gospel, 'I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power.'

It was to the authority of his office he ascribed the efficacy and success of his ministry. And though the offices of pastor and teacher hath not the authority as that of an apostle, nor the call so extraordinary, yet 'despise not the day of small things;' for they are the blessed ordinances of God, and shall have their due efficacy upon the hearts and heads of those exercised therein, and it is there God commands the blessing.

And by the way, the separation to the work of the ministry is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, who is the executive power of the Trinity; and therefore it is said, Acts xx., 'Feed the flock, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers;' and the apostle says, 1 Cor. xii. 1–3, 'Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant; ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto those dumb idols, even as ye were led; wherefore I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' The apostle convinces them that those spiritual gifts and offices which were among them were merely gifts out of grace, though a common grace to ungodly men, to the rebellious also. He convinces them by this, that they were supernatural, for till my ministry and the gospel came among you (says he), you were far enough from such gifts. 'Ye know that you were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led.' And therefore, if you have any knowledge of Christ, it must be from the Spirit, as an heavenly agent, that is come upon you all. The knowledge of, and assent to, Jesus as the Lord, must be from the Holy Ghost; you have it not by nature, you were led after dumb idols. These gifts are all supernatural, and from a divine agent, and in that respect they are called graces, and a gift. But then the making a man a minister, and putting him into the divine office, whether of pastor or teacher, is no less than a work of all the three persons, and not of the Holy Ghost only. There is a conjunction of all three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, blessing and laying on of hands as it were upon a minister ordained: 1 Cor. xii. 4–6, 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.' There you have all the three persons: the gifts of a minister are from the Spirit; the administration, *i.e.* the office where a man administers, is from Christ as the Lord; the operations, the powerful success that works upon men's hearts by them, is from God the Father. You see your calling, brethren, as the apostle speaks in another case; I mean you brethren of the ministry, learn to follow your callings and your authority. When Christ laid his hand upon John, Rev. i., how did it revive him and put life into him. All the three persons in the work do lay on their hands. We count it a great concurrent dispensation of God, that each person in the Trinity should share the works of our salvation among them, and it is a wonderful thing to bless them for it; but seldom have the three persons concurred in one action. When Christ was baptized, and God himself proclaimed, 'Thou art my Son,' there were all the three persons. The Father was heard by speaking himself immediately, the Holy Ghost was descending as a dove upon Christ, and the Son of God was himself in the water. And here is another θεοφανία, an appearance of God in three persons, at the ordination of a minister.

Which notion is confirmed and backed by our apostle in naming two of the persons, the Father and the Son, as authors of the instituted officers of a church: Gal. i. 1, 'Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead'). There is two of them, the will of the Father and Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost,

the third person, you have in Acts xiii., as expressly named to be a founder of this work: 'Separate me Paul, for the work I have appointed.'

And from hence you may learn what holy, holy, holy ground it is that an instituted officer of the New Testament stands upon, which Mr Bains, in his *Diocesan Trial*, hath firmly asserted; and it sets right and corrects the Brownist error at their first setting out, who looked on their ministers but as servants of the church, and instituted by the church only, which is but of human institution, Gal. i. 1; and so they chose them anew, to officiate in their several turns, remaining but brethren still. But Mr Bains makes them the immediate servants of Christ, who is the instituter of them.

And from hence I assert, that a minister is a servant of Christ to the church, to do his work to the church as occasion is. Before his call unto the ministry, he was as gold in the bullion, fit for, and capable of, the ministry; and the church, in Christ's name, chooses him, and sets upon him the seal of a sacred separation of him unto Christ; and in Christ's name he acts toward them, independently on them, till he shall forfeit himself and his calling by deserving to be excommunicated.

And hence I assert also, that they are not only ministers to that church which calls them, but preach as ministers, and with a ministerial blessing accompanying them, wherever they are called to preach. And herein doth a singly called, though gifted, man fall short of that blessing which accompanies a minister rightly separated unto an office of ministry in a church. There were some in the church, either of Antioch or Jerusalem, that were called 'principal brethren,' yet only brethren, though the word *principal* is annexed. And it is an ordinary style in the Epistles, when the apostle speaks of the brethren in a church, who are chiefly such, he styles them 'one of you;' yea, though they be acknowledged by the apostles to have been helpful to them; whereas, when they have been separated to the ministry, either as pastor or teacher of the church, Paul gives the honourable title of 'unto you' (speaking of that church), 'a faithful minister;' and under that title he sets out Epaphras to the Colossians, who was minister to their church; yea, and hence it comes to pass, that whenever they preach to any either called or to be called, they may be said to preach as ministers to them. When, Eph. iv. 12, their ordinary pastors and teachers are said to be in the work of the ministry, they are said to be in it not only for the edifying the body of Christ, that is already his body, but πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν, for the jointing in, as members of the body, such as are yet unconverted and out of joint, and loose from them, though elect; and if they be ministers (as it is there expressly said) to the jointing of them in, then they are ministers before conversion, to them whom to convert God blesses them as ministers. And what other is the reason why those who have been fixed ministers to a people, and by persecution are driven out, have that allowance too given to them by Christ, who says, Mat. x. 23, 'If they persecute you in one city, fly into another.' For Jesus Christ is not a loser thereby, but he follows on his blessing of them for conversion unto a new people; for why? They carry their ministry along with them, and preach as ministers to whomever they preach; for they preach πρὸς καταρτισμὸν, for the jointing of them in. Know, therefore, that your ministry, or being ministers, doth not stand on your own feet, but on Christ's feet, in whose hand these stars are, for their further motion, guidance, and protection and blessing on them.

CHAPTER X.

Of the communion of saints, which the members of a church ought to have one with another.

Having proved that Christ hath instituted divers sorts of officers to be in a church, and having described the distinction of their offices, the thing next to be considered is, What communion the members of such a church ought to have one with another (besides the communion which they publicly enjoy in ordinances), for their mutual edification and increase of their graces.

The communion which I intend is not by way of exercising gifts, but of grace; a communion, not in the way of a set institution or ordinance, but in the way of a fit means and help to increase that love which ought to be between one member and another. The question, in sum, is, Whether every member is not bound to seek the knowledge of every member's spirit and graces, and that not only by occasional converse, but by fixed meetings appointed on purpose for such spiritual converse, to know one another's cases and spirits, and 'to provoke one another to love, and to good works,' Heb. x. 24. There are two things which must be supposed as unavoidably to be granted.

1. That every member of a church cannot in public edify the others, for women must not speak in the church, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. And, besides, public meetings are for exercise of gifts, which even all the men have not.

2. In private occasional converse, one member may not have opportunity to discourse with another once in seven years; for when will occasion offer for a godly servant to discourse with the master of another family? There seems, then, to be a necessity of a fixed meeting to this very end, that such opportunities may be afforded to them.

And, 3, it may be demanded, whether for these members, who occasionally perhaps meet every day, such appointed meetings are not necessary, that there may be a set time for this spiritual conversation. It is not meant that herein there should be preaching or praying, but a spiritual conference, to gain experience of each other's improvements in grace.

1. I shall consider whether this be a duty, and what in a church fellowship should bind the members of it to such a duty.

1. This is certain, that one member should make known his spiritual case and condition to another, of known faithfulness, James v. 16; and that he should make known too his needs or wants of any kind, not to the minister only, but to any of the members of the church, who is in a special manner known to be faithful, that he may pray for him. Confess your faults (says the apostle), and pray one for another, that you may be healed. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' That phrase, *Confess your faults one to another*, is not general, as if it were to be done to every one; but the apostle's design is to shew that there are occasions upon which this duty is to be done to some.

But, 2, that place in Heb. x. 24 seems to call for and require a more special animadversion, to know one another's cases and experiences, and that not only as they may be made known occasionally, but to inquire of one's own accord, and to take occasion to do it. 'Let us consider one another,' says the apostle, 'to provoke unto love, and to good works.' The word is *κατανοῶμεν*, the same which is used to express, Mat. vii. 3, the diligent inquiry and exact animadversion which we ought to make upon ourselves.

3. This also seems to call for such a stated converse of church members together, to inquire into and know one another's cases and experiences, because otherwise every member would not have an equal benefit in church communion. For some that are rich, and have time to converse much together, may indeed reap the fruits of a blessed fellowship; but others that are poor, or servants, &c., will be abridged, and so the same inconveniences will arise as were in the Corinthians' love-feasts, 1 Cor. xi. 22.

1. Then it is evident from Scripture that it is the duty of every member to observe, and to take care of another's spiritual welfare. This appears from the duty enjoined, Heb. x. 24, and it is a duty distinct from assembling together, which follows in the next verse. The same thing is also manifest from that text, 1 Thes. v. 11, 'Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye do.' The Greek word is παρακαλεῖτε, *exhort and edify one another*, εἷς τὸν ἕνα, *i. e.* 'every one of you, do this duty to every one.' And the apostle commends them, that it was their practice so to do, 'even as also,' says he, 'you do;' so that a primitive apostolical church did practise this duty. And this was distinct from the work of the officers, for of them he speaks afterwards, ver. 12. And then he tells them the several ways wherein they should exercise this duty one towards another: ver. 14, 'Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.'

But the question is, Whether this duty is only to be exercised occasionally, as the providence of God gives opportunities and occasions of converse, and according to the relations wherein he hath set men, of man and wife, master and servant, &c. That as we ought to give to poor saints, when there is occasion, so it is duty also to exhort, admonish, &c., when an opportunity is offered.

1. It is evident that this duty is to be discharged between persons who live in these relations; and as man and wife have more occasion of converse, so more of this duty is incumbent upon them. They, not only as members of a church, but as being in such relations, ought to serve the ends of church-fellowship. And the greater the occasion is, the more are they obliged to this duty; though he owes it as a member, yet he is bound the more to exercise it in this occasional way of relation: Eph. iv. 16, 'From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.' The word πᾶν τὸ σῶμα (which is translated *the whole body*), may be translated *every body*, or particular church, for he speaks of particular churches there, for the whole mystical body of Christ is not edified by every particular person.

2. He mentions here the edification of the members, by the members, as considered distinct from their officers.

3. The word συναρμολογούμενον, *fitly joined*, evinceth as much. It signifies being joined as with sinews and bones, for so ὁ ἁρμὸς is taken, Heb. iv. 12. And so here is it to be understood; for the apostle speaks of a body which every joint supplieth, διὰ πάσης ἁφῆς, as he also useth the word, Col. ii. 19. The body is knit by joints, and the nourishment is supplied from Christ; and it is knit together, not only by joints, but by sinews (συνδέσμων, Col. ii. 19), which run between every one. So then there are joints by which Christ supplieth nourishment to the body, and there are sinews by which the members of that body are joined together; and those are the several relations which the members have one to another, either as in a family, or in the offices of the church. For if there were no other relation, yet this of membership in a church is one sufficient, since all the members have from Christ

a measure of supplies for the nourishment and strengthening of the whole body. And the laws of life and motion are as natural here as they are in bodies of flesh and blood; for as the several parts of them receive spirits from the head to enliven and move them, so, to all the members of Christ's body, the church, the Spirit is conveyed from him the head, to give spiritual life and motion to them all, and so to the whole body. So that if there were no other relation between the saints but this of their being set and joined in one body, the church, and not in a family, &c., only; yet this is enough for their mutual life, strength, and edification: 1 Cor. xii. 14–22, 'For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.' And indeed every member hath some grace, or some experiences wherein it differs from another, and is helpful to it. As the members of the natural body, though consisting of the same flesh and blood, yet differ in some properties wherein they excel, and wherein they are useful to the other, so every member in a church hath some peculiar grace by which the other may profit. So Paul says of himself, writing to the church of the Romans, that he was comforted by their mutual faith, not by their gifts, Rom. i. 12, 'That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.' In like manner he says, that when in conference with the other apostles, there was nothing added to him, yet their discerning the grace of God which was in him had the desired effect, Gal. ii. 6, 9. There is then no member in a church but what is necessary and helpful, and no one can say that he hath no need of another. Thus the apostle tells us, that they who are feeble are necessary, 1 Cor. xii. 22. And therefore he argues, ver. 25, that all should have the same care one of another, though never so mean an object. And, ver. 27, says he, 'you are the body of Christ, and members in particular,' not only members for the use of the whole body, but for the use of every one member considered apart.

There are three expressions used by the apostle, which shew that the care which the saints in church-fellowship together ought to have over one another, should not only be exercised as occasion offers, but that it is a constant duty, and that we ought to seek all occasions of acting it.

1. The apostle says, Heb. x. 24, 'And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works.' The Greek words are, Κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους, let us accurately consider one another, that our care over one another may be answerable.

2. The same apostle speaks in like manner, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 'That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for onother.' The Greek word μεριμνῶσι signifies that we should have an especial and solicitous care of one another's souls.

3. What the apostle says in another place is to the same purpose: 1 Thes. v. 11, 'Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.' The Greek words παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἷς τον ἕνα, import not a general, but a particular care; not only occasional, but such as we should study, and endeavour to exercise, for the edification parti-

cularly of every one. But besides, there are these further reasons of the thing:

1. Because there is this difference between the members of the church universal, and the members of a particular church, that the former are obliged to those duties of taking care to help and edify one another as occasion serves; but the other are bound by a more especial covenant to perform this duty one to another in a constant manner, and therefore ought to seek occasion for it.

2. The same thing is evident from this, that every member hath in him something that is needful for another, 1 Cor. xii. 22, though not in gifts, yet in graces, by which the strongest may profit; as Paul increased in faith by the mutual faith in the Romans, chap. i. 12, though in the gifts nothing could be added to him.

3. There would not otherwise be the same care taken of all that there is of some, which is contrary to what the apostle enjoins, 1 Cor. xii. 25. And reason shews that care should rather be taken of the weak, 1 Cor. xii. 22, 23, 1 Thes. v. 14. And the neglect and despising of the poor and weak, was the fault of the love feasts, which the apostle reproves, 1 Cor. xi. 22.

4. Because, otherwise, the relation of being a member in a particular church, would add nothing to the person as proper to such a relation, if one member was not thereby bound to be helpful to another, not only occasionally, but on set purpose, and on appointed times, when occasions are not offered.

But the question will be, How this care, which every member is to have of another, will differ from the care which is incumbent upon the officers to take of the church.

Ans. 1. The officers are bound to their care in a more especial manner, and the exercise of it is incumbent on them, *ex officio*, by virtue of their office. And besides, their care reacheth to the whole church, but every member's care to another: Rom. xii. 4, 5, 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' The Greek word is πρᾶξιν, *activeness*, *working;* so that it is evident from this text of Scripture, that every member hath its peculiar working, as we say that the eye hath not only its office, but the ear also hath an office proper to it.

2. The officers are wholly in this work, and entirely devoted to it.

3. The officers have the charge of the whole, and of every part, which is not incumbent on the private brethren. Though in Rom. xii. the apostle mentions the authority and work of the officers, yet withal he insinuates the activeness and working of each member as needful: Rom. xii. 4, 5, 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' And so, in 1 Cor. xii., he speaks of works and duties, which are incumbent on more persons than the officers of the church. And the apostle Peter also speaks of private members, and their duty and work, 1 Peter iv. 5; for he speaks of the elders and their office in the fifth chapter, which follows.

5. It is made a sign of grace for saints to visit each other. It discovered the truth of grace and faith in Moses's heart, that he visited his brethren. James makes it also a trial of the sincerity of our grace, Isa. i. 27, 'Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.' And our Lord Jesus makes it the touchstone and test of his chosen sheep, when he separates them from the goats, that they visited the poor little ones among his saints, Mat. xxv. 36, 40. And if there is the like reason to visit the members of a church, then certainly it is to be done. We are to shew

our love to their souls, to visit and refresh them; for souls have need as well as bodies, and require suitable supplies.

6. The prophet mentions it as the duty and practice of saints under the gospel, to speak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16. What he speaks of those times, hath reference to ours.

7. There ought to be so great and peculiar a love between the members of a church, as cannot be discharged but in the performance of this special office and duty: Rom. xii. 10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.' It is φιλοστοργία, *a natural instinct of affection*, φιλαδελφία, *a natural love*, such as parents bear to their children, and brethren to brethren. And in this they are to increase and abound: 1 Thes. iii. 12, 'And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you:' 1 Peter iv. 8, 'And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover a multitude of sins.' The word is ἐκτενῆ, such a fervency as presseth to a mark. It is pure love; all inordinacy of love of self, of wife, &c., is removed; any inordinacy would take too much, that there would not be love enough for all the brotherhood. As it is such a love, so it is a growing love; and therefore what is necessary for the feeding it, is necessary to put forth towards the members of the church; which, how can it be done without a communion maintained among them?

8. Whatever other relations binds us to, we are engaged to the same duties by our relation of brethren in a church. If obligations of civility, or ties of nature and kindred, engage men to visit one another; then, much more the relation of members in a church obligeth us to the same duty; and the poorest, meanest saint, is as worthy of it as any; for otherwise we should have the faith of our Lord Jesus with respect of persons, which the apostle forbids, James ii. 1.

Obj. But the work and business of the officers in a church take off this care from the private members, and render it unnecessary. And besides, they have other callings, as being merchants, &c., which they ought to mind and attend.

Ans. It is true; but yet these are duties which occasionally they ought to perform; as if offence be given them, they are enjoined to speak and admonish the person, Mat. xviii. 15. They are required also to do good, as opportunity serves, Rom. xiv. 19, 1 Cor. x. 24. If anything be revealed to a person, it is proper for him to tell it, if there be leisure or opportunity; whereas an officer ought always to have something ready for edification.

The main question to be discoursed is, wherein this duty lies?

1. It doth not properly consist in the communication of such gifts, whereby the church is edified in the public worship of God. It doth not properly consist in expounding nor in praying together, though this may be done occasionally. There are two sorts of gifts.

(1.) Such as are superadded to graces, and are sanctified to a public use, as the gift of expression in prayer, of prophesying, &c.

(2.) There are such gifts as are necessary to communicate, and make known our graces one to another, as to be able to express what experiences of God's love, &c., we have had; for, as the thoughts of our minds cannot be known, unless we have a tongue to express them, so neither can our graces be known without such a gift. Now the end of this communion of saints, whereof I now discourse, is not to make known such gifts, but to communicate experiences, not to repeat sermons (which is a duty proper to families), but to declare what it was in a sermon that God blessed to them,

and that affected their hearts, what promises they have found to be made good to them, &c.

2. This duty of communion of saints doth not consist in giving an account of their graces in that set way, as they gave an account of their conversion, when they were first admitted into the church. But it is a communication of their experiences, as to the growth of their graces, and as to the exercise of them. The graces of a believer, the τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *may be known of God* in him, may rather appear thus, by way of conference, than in a set narration. The reason of it is, because an account of the person's grace is not now given, for a judgment to be made of his state thereupon, as it was at his admission into the church. There is not in this case any authoritative act, for none have power to call for an account. But the duty incumbent on the person is, to consider whether the declaration of his experiences may be for the edifying and comforting of others, and what good fruits may arise out of such a manifestation, and accordingly to do it. It is to be minded what God leads a man's spirit to confer about. There is such a thing as a manifestation of spirits in a several way, whereby is not meant, that a person is obliged to lay open all that is in his heart; but that, by a mutual conference concerning spiritual things, there should be a test given what is in one another's spirits.

3. This communion doth not consist in a confession of all sins, or in discovery of everything that burdens us. For to that end a believer will make choice of some particular, in whose wisdom and faithfulness he can confide, as occasion is, James v. 16. As for extraordinary cases, wherein there is need of help, as in case of feeble-mindedness, 1 Thes. v. 4, temptations, &c., there is no need for any believer to tell his case to all the members of the church particularly, that they may all pray for him, for upon his making it known to the pastor or officers, he may be prayed for publicly.

4. But yet that love which the members of a church bear one to another will move them, and put them upon a solicitousness, and a study, and care for each other's souls.

5. Let us consider that subjection in which all the members ought to be one toward another, whereof the apostle speaks: 1 Peter v. 5, 'Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' I cannot conceive otherwise, but that by this subjection (the word is ὑποτασσόμενοι), is meant that they should be content to receive instruction one from another.

6. It is to be considered that Christ puts an honour on the weakest members, 1 Cor. xii. 18–24. And that there may be no schism in the body, application must be made to one as well as to another, and there must not be a total neglect of any: 1 Cor. xii. 25, 'That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.' And so likewise the apostle tells us that there are diversities of gifts, and administrations, and operations: 1 Cor. xii. 4–7, 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.' These diversities of gifts and administrations do not relate to officers only, but to the whole body, so that a course should be taken to receive the benefit of every member's gift, for otherwise there will be a neglect of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are the fountain of these diverse gifts and administrations.

BOOK VII.

That the preaching of the gospel is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, instituted for the conversion of sinners, and for the edification of the saints.—Of the use and necessity of ministers wholly set apart to preach.—That Christ by his institution hath appointed a due maintenance for ministers.—Concerning the time for the administration of ordinances, and whether the sacrament of the Lord's supper ought to be administered on every Lord's day.—Whether, in case of necessity, a church may by common consent divide themselves, to meet in several parts, and receive the Lord's supper in such distinct meetings, rather than omit that ordinance wholly.—Whether in case of apparent danger of life, loss of estate rationally foreseen, or in case of force and violence, causing ordinances to cease, there may not be prudent forbearance or secret avoidance.—Whether one who is not a church member may be the subject of baptism.—Whether one who is not a pastor may administer baptism.—Whether a church may depose an officer for a fault, which doth not deserve excommunication.—Of anointing with oil.—Of toleration and liberty of conscience to be granted to particular churches, though differing from the national constitution.

CHAPTER I.

That the preaching of the gospel is an ordinance instituted by Christ, for the conversion of sinners, and edification of the saints.—The reason why he hath chosen the preaching of the word by men to be the means of salvation rather than any other.—The pleas which men make against their constant attendance on the preaching of the word as needless, answered.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.—Rom. X. 14–18.

The apostle having proved at large in the former part of this chapter, and the whole epistle, that the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith was the only true righteousness whereby men are to be saved, he begins here, at the 14th verse of this chapter, to lay down the outward instrumental means of attaining to this righteousness and salvation, and this by a gradation or chain of causes; all which he shews to hang upon preaching of the word of faith, as the first link of that whole chain of outward means. And as, in Rom. viii. 29, 30, he makes a chain of the principal causes of our salvation: 'Whom he foreknew, those he predestinated; and whom he predestinated, those he also called,' &c.; so here he makes a chain of the means outward,

praying and worshipping God (that is the first step), 'whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,' ver. 13; without prayer there is no salvation, it is here (by a synecdoche) put for all obedience. But then, 'How shall they call on God without faith, and how believe without hearing, and how shall they hear without a preacher?' ver. 4. For it is such a hearing as is by preaching; neither is this preaching (the hearing whereof is blessed to work faith) by any but by men sent, ver. 15; and the conclusion of all this is, that faith cometh by hearing, ver. 17.

And experience also helps to manifest and confirm this. For still, where God meant to have a church called, thither he still sends, and there he maintains the preaching of the gospel. For this compare Acts xvi. 6, 8, with the 9th and 10th verses of the 18th chapter; in that first cited place it is said that God forbade Paul to preach in Bithynia, but in this other, that he bade him stay and preach at Corinth, giving this reason: for 'I have much people in this city.' So also, says the apostle, Col. i. 1, 4, 5, 'Knowing the election of God, our gospel came unto you, not in word only,' &c. And therefore we see that those places that want it lie like deserts and wildernesses, full of rudeness and ignorance, and the inhabitants living rather like beasts than men. And this is the reason why the light of the gospel, and the preaching thereof, shifts so from place to place (in the east once, now in the west), for still where God hath a good shoal and fry of fish, thither he sends his fishers with their drag-nets, it being good fishing sometimes in one coast, sometimes in another. Where God intends to plant a church, thither he sends the gospel, 'to make known by it the mystery of his will, that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all his elect,' Eph. i. 9, 10. What is the reason of this?

1. Take that which the apostle intimates in this Rom. x. 17, 'faith comes by hearing;' and how so? 'Hearing is by the word of God.' So that if the reason be asked, why this way rather than any other? the answer is, It is so appointed and ordained by God, for that is meant by *word* here, his word being all one with his commandment and appointment. So says Christ: Luke iv. 4, 'Man lives not by bread alone, but by the word of God;' that is, by this ordinance of God, that bread should nourish; it is not said hearing of the word, but by the word. What is the reason the rain, that falls down upon the earth from these bottles of heaven, the clouds, drops such fatness with it, and crowns the year with increase? Ps. lxv. 11. It is only this, God at the beginning did so appoint it, as we read in Gen. ii. 5. Now, Isa. lv. 10, 11, it is said, 'As the rain cometh down and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, &c., so shall my word go forth and prosper in the thing whereto I appointed and sent it.' It shall prosper, because God so appointed it, and it shall cause the earth both to bring forth and bud, that is, it shall work both beginnings and increase. Yea, it doth that which other rain doth not, for other rain falling on a briar, it remaineth a briar still; but where this rain falls, God accompanying it with a blessing, instead of a thorn comes up a fir; and of fuel for hell it makes men fruitful trees to God, and fit for his building, for it fully alters the nature of them. And though watering the earth with watering-pots is good and useful in the time of drought, and so is reading of good books and conferring of things holy, yet preaching is the kindly ordinance, when 'doctrine drops as the rain, and speech distils as the dew, and as small rain upon the tender herb,' as in preaching it still doth, Deut. xxxii. 2.

2. As God appointed it, so Jesus Christ prayed for it, in John xvii. Christ consecrates his death, and prays for the application of it, namely, that the apostles might be sanctified, and how? 'Through thy truth' (says

Christ), that is, the gospel, called 'the word of truth,' Eph. i. 13. And then he goes on to pray 'not only for those, but for all that should believe;' and how should they come to believe? 'Through their word,' so vers. 19 and 20. And certain it is, that Christ's intercession puts a force into this means unto this day. For doth Christ mean only the apostles' preaching, as that which he then prayed for? No, this prayer reacheth unto the ends of the world; for it is their word that we do and shall preach, and we are their successors. Therefore, Mat. xxviii. 20, Christ says, though he speak only to his disciples, 'I am with you unto the end of the world.'

3. As God the Father appointed it, and God the Son prayed for it, so God the Holy Spirit is by promise and covenant engaged to accompany it with his blessing unto the seed of Christ for ever: Isa. lix. 21, 'My Spirit, who is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, for ever.' It is spoken of the word as preached unto the people, and therefore we find, Acts x. 44, 'Whilst Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word.' And therefore it is, that, 1 Cor. ii. 4, the preaching of the gospel is called the 'demonstration of the Spirit,' and, 2 Cor. iii. 8, the 'ministration of the Spirit.' Now if any demand the reason why God ordained it, and Christ prayed for it rather than any other means, I shall, for the explanation of this, propound certain queries, in the answers to which I shall give the reason of it; and I shall proceed herein by degrees.

Quest. 1. Why did not God work immediately by his own power, and rather use no means at all?

Ans. 1. He doth this to shew his diverse manner of working, for he still loves to vary his dispensations towards man. At the first creation he used no means, but made man in his own image; even as when he gave the law, he both made the stone tables immediately, and also writ it with his own finger. But now, in this recreation and renewing of the image, because he will not go the same way to work, he will take a pen in his hand to do it withal. 'Ye are,' says the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'the epistle of Christ ministered by us.' And though God made the world without the help of angels or any other creature, yet now in this new creation he is pleased to shew his diverse ways of working, and takes creatures to work by, whom therefore he calls co-workers with him, 1 Cor. iii. 9.

Ans. 2. He now useth means, as to shew his various kinds of working, so to hide it from the eyes of the undiscerning world, who contemn the means to their destruction. For this work of conversion being the only standing miracle in the church (and indeed the greatest, and therefore all is summed up in it), Christ therefore hides his power in working it: 'The blind,' says he, 'receive their sight, the deaf hear, and the poor receive the gospel,' but he lets them not see from whom all this comes, and by whom it is wrought; that so that might come upon the foolish world which was fore-prophesied, Heb. i. 5, and alleged by the apostle, Acts xiii. 41, 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work among you which you will in no wise believe, though it be declared unto you.' Because the means are so small and so unlikely, therefore it is that the world despises God's word and people; and they wonder at this, that such weak means should have such power on men's hearts, and yet they believe it not; they feel no such thing in their own hearts, and so falling to despise it, they perish in their own ways. You have it, Prov. xxv. 2, that 'it is the glory of God to conceal a thing,' to carry his greatest counsels and works covertly and closely; and therefore he hides them under means, because all should not see them. So, when he sent his Son, how did he befool the devil and the world in sending the Prince of glory,

clad and concealed in infirmities, to be crucified, and so to bring about God's greatest work! 1 Cor. ii. 6–8.

Quest. 2. But why of all things else hath he chosen his word to do this?

Ans. 1. He hath chosen preaching of the word, because it is the weakest means of all others, and therefore his power would the more appear unto his own glory in it. What is weaker than a word? and yet God created the world by it, for he only said, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' &c. But you will say, That was his own word spoken by himself. I answer, that now to manifest his power the more, he will take the voice of a frail man speaking his word for him; and what is weaker than a man's breath? Indeed, 'in the word of a king there is power' (as Solomon speaks), but what power is there in the words of a mean and weak man? Yes, there is a great power, and the reason why God chose this means is given, 1 Cor. i. 18 to ver. 28. It is to shew his power and wisdom unto his own, and to confound the world. They know not God in his wisdom, by reason of their own wisdom which they are so full of, and by reason of their high esteem of worldly learning and eloquence, accounting the plain, naked, and slow style of the word to be but foolishness; that is, a foolish and an empty doctrine, contrary to their reason, and utterly unlike to work any great matter (as the Athenians thought); but God chose it the rather: 'It pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,' ver. 21, to shew that his foolishness is wiser than men's wisdom. And if his foolishness be so, then what is his wisdom? He sent his apostles forth, a company of poor fishermen; and were they likely men to conquer the world by commanding living men to believe on one crucified, especially when the conditions were such as these, that men rich, and learned, and great, should wholly deny themselves and their own wisdom, and become fools; was this ever likely? Well, but see, ver. 20, how the apostle triumphs upon this occasion: 'Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer?' They are clear put down, they have lost ground both among Jews and Gentiles by this foolish and weak means, this preaching of Christ crucified; all their wit and carnal arguments could not prevail so much as one of the apostle's sermons. And so when Luther, Calvin, and those other divines came once to preach, where were the schoolmen and learned of the world? Popery fell down before preaching, like Dagon before the ark of God. And God appointed this way, that his wisdom might appear to the confusion of the wise, that so his power might the more appear to the praise of his grace towards them that are called, and to the confusion of Satan, and, ver. 25, to shew that 'the weakness of God is stronger than men.' If God can by a word work such effects as all creatures are not able to work, then what would his strength do if put to it? What will that power do for his elect in another world? And this means did God appoint, thereby also to confound the power of Satan, as the strength of Jericho was subdued by the blast of rams' horns. Thus, Ps. viii. ver. 2, it is said, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.' Through the weakest means God hath ordained the greatest strength; and why? 'To still the enemy,' to confound Satan, that he should not boast of his conquest. God therefore chose preaching, that it might be his own power unto salvation.

Ans. 2. The second reason why, of all means else, God hath chosen his word as the means whereby to work grace, and to reveal himself unto us, rather than any other visible representation, whereby he might have made himself known; yea, rather than by his works (though they are said to preach also, as Rom. x. compared with Ps. viii. implies), was because the word was less apt to be abused to idolatry, by corrupt nature, of all things

else. This was the most naked and simple representation, and most suitable to reasonable creatures that could be, to represent things by words. God made himself known by creatures, Rom. i. 20; and what was the issue of it? Vers. 23 and 25, men fell to 'worship the creature instead of God the Creator, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,' &c. The sun and other glorious creatures represented God, and they worshipped those creatures more than God, and ascribed all unto them. Thus also in the time of popery, when preaching was banished, they represented all religion to the eye; the objects of which man is more apt to idolize, than the instructions which he barely receives by the ear. An evident instance whereof we have in this, that whereas God ordained but two means to convey the gospel to us, one by the word preached to the ear, the other to the eye in sacraments, which are visible signs (and as Christ is preached in the one so in the other, and indeed no more in the one than in the other), yet corrupt nature made an idol of the sacrament, and never of preaching; and this men did, though God chose the meanest things to these signs, even bread and wine. And for this cause especially God sanctified his word, as a means to convey himself unto us, as appears by Deut. iv. 12, 'The Lord spake unto you: and ye heard the voice of his words, but saw no similitude,' &c.

Quest. 3. The third query is, Why hearing of the word should be by God appointed, rather than reading of it alone by ourselves?

Ans. 1. God hath appointed the hearing of the word, because he would confound Satan, and untwist and dissolve the works of the devil in the same way that they were woven. Our first parents took their infidelity in by the ear, and therefore God thought good to let faith in the same way.

Ans. 2. Because God had many simple people to be called; and indeed 'not many wise,' nor book-learned, are of that number; and if reading were the ordinary means, how should they do? But the simplest can ordinarily hear as well as the wisest; and so the poor do come to receive the gospel, who otherwise would want it.

Quest. 4. The fourth query is, Why hath God ordained hearing the word expounded rather than hearing it read? So we find it, Neh. viii. 7, 8, it is said, 'The Levites read in the book of God's law distinctly, giving the sense, and causing them to understand the reading;' that is, the word read. The same we have 2 Chron. xvii. 9. The Levites went about with the book of the law, and taught the people; and the reasons of this are,

Ans. 1. Because of the dulness that is in many people: Acts viii. 30, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' said Philip to the eunuch. 'How can I,' says he, 'except some man should guide me?' It was therefore necessary that there should be men whose calling and business it should be to study out the meaning of the word, and so to reveal it unto others; and who might (as Ezra did, chap. vii. 10) 'prepare their hearts' (and set themselves apart) 'to seek the law' (or the meaning of it), 'and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments;' and (as Timothy) wholly give themselves to attend on reading, &c.

Ans. 2. Because Jesus Christ, when he ascended, 'gave gifts unto men,' Eph. iv. 8. And, 1, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being in him, Col. ii. 3, lest when he went to heaven he should have carried all wisdom away with him; therefore, as he left the word written behind him, so he gave gifts to men to expound it, both for the begetting and perfecting of the saints. Now, as for simply reading the word, every one can do that; but an 'interpreter' is 'one of a thousand,' Job xxxiii. 23. And it were a derogation from Christ to make a faculty of bare reading to be one of the

utmost fruits of his ascension. And for this reason also it is that the gifts of men are reckoned among the chiefest goods and riches in a Christian's inventory: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'All are yours, Paul and Apollos,' &c.

Ans. 3. It is not the letter of the word that ordinally doth convert, but the spiritual meaning of it, as revealed and expounded. Paul, who had the letter of the law, yet says of himself, Rom. vii. 9, that he was without the law until the spiritual meaning of it was revealed to him. There is the letter, the husk; and there is the spirit, the kernel; and when we by expounding the word do open the husk, out drops the kernel. It is the meaning of the word which is the word indeed, it is the sense of it which is its soul. The devil, quoting Scripture, used the letter of it; but the apostles, when they quote it, allege not so much the words as the meaning. And therefore, 1 Cor. ii. 16, we are said to 'have the mind of Christ;' that is, what he meant in his word when he revealed it. Now, preaching in a more special manner reveals God's word. When an ointment box is once opened, then it casts its savour about; and when the juice of a medicinal herb is once strained out and applied, then it heals. And so it is the spiritual meaning of the word let into the heart which converts it and turns it to God.

Quest. 5. The fifth query is, If we are to be saved rather by hearing the word expounded than by it as read, yet still, why by it only as preached by men like ourselves? Why not by God's immediate voice from heaven, or why not by the preaching of angels? The reasons of it are,

Ans. 1. Because men themselves first chose this way, as most agreeable and suitable unto themselves, and unto their natures and conditions: Deut. v. 25, 26, 'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God, we shall die. Go thou therefore near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and come and speak thou it unto us, and we will hear it,' &c. Ver. 27, And God, hearing the people say thus, said unto Moses, 'They have well spoken, &c. Stand thou therefore here, and I will speak to thee all the statutes and judgments which thou shalt teach them,' &c.

Ans. 2. God betrusted this treasure in earthen vessels, not heavenly (as it is, 2 Cor. iv. 7), because we are not able to behold the angels. You see how the sons of men have always trembled when they appeared. And further, we should have been apt to worship them, as John would have done, Rev. xxii. 8; and therefore God appointed men like ourselves to be the instruments.

Use 1. See here the necessity of this ordinance, so as to attend upon it, waiting upon God in the dispensation of it for the conversion of thy soul. 'A necessity lies on me,' says Paul, 'to preach the gospel.' Now that necessity of his duty was founded upon another necessity, namely, that it was a means to save the souls of men whom God had committed unto him. As for such as are already converted, I shall not need to urge upon them the necessity of this ordinance, they have one within who will do it. If they should but want a few meals of their appointed food, there is a new creature within them would cry for bread. In the first of Peter, i. 23, the apostle, having said they were 'begotten by the word,' in the next chapter he exhorts them, 'as new born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby.' As if he had said, If you be but babes of a day old, you will desire this word by which you were begotten. Now, for such as are not yet converted, let me ask them but this one question, Do you think salvation necessary? Yes; then so is this, *necessitate medii;* for (says the apostle) it is 'the power of God unto salvation.' But you will say, God's power can save me by other means, if he will. I deny it not; but see what James says: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of

truth.' He that out of his good pleasure begets us, out of the same free will hath chosen this means, even the word of truth, to do it by. You see the power of God engaged in it, it is his 'power unto salvation;' and you see his will also in it, 'of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' But you will say, as Rom. x., 'Have we not all heard?' I have heard sermons enough already, if they would do me any good. Yes (God be thanked), 'their sound is gone out into all the world.' But let me ask you another question, which the apostle asks in the former words, Have all you that have heard obeyed the gospel? Hast thou had faith wrought? has thy heart and life been changed as yet by this word heard? The apostles, who were better preachers than we, yet cry out, as Isaiah once, 'Who hath believed our report?' And if thou be one of the members yet unchanged, thou hast as much need to attend to the word as if thou hadst never heard it, that so thou mayest escape that damnation and fiery vengeance that will befall them who 'obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ,' 2 Thess. i. 8. But you may haply say, I have knowledge enough already, and as much as the preacher can teach me, and may not that work sufficiently in me to put me upon practice? Suppose this, that thou couldst not increase in knowledge, yet thou mayest as yet not know anything as thou oughtest to know; and this plea is a sign of it, and so made by the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 2. And though thou mayest have knowledge *in salvation*, and the matters of it, yet not *to salvation*, as the apostle distinguisheth it, 2 Tim. iii. 15; for such a knowledge must be a new work of the Holy Ghost, whom we receive by preaching of the word: Gal. iii. 2, 'Received ye not the Spirit by the hearing of faith?' All thy notions may lie as dry gunpowder barrelled up in thee; but what shall give fire to them, and inflame thy heart by them, but a being anew baptized with the Holy Ghost as with fire, and by his striking some spark and good motion in [you]? Now the Holy Ghost falls on men at these ordinances. Preaching is therefore called 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. When a pill lies dead in a man's body, and works not, then physicians use to prescribe another, which often sets all a-working. So after all the sermons thou hast heard, thou hast need hear again, to make all effectual to thee again. When saving knowledge is once begun in thee, it receiveth daily increase by the preaching of the word, even then when notional knowledge doth not; that is, suppose thou hearest no new truths discovered, but the same again and again, yet in the things represented by those notions, thou mayest get a further and more clear and distinct insight every time thou hearest them. Thou mayest grow up into more riches of assurance of the knowledge of those truths thou knowest, as the apostle speaks, Col. ii. 2; and thou mayest grow up to more comfort and joy in those truths. Paul desired still to preach to them (although converted), for the furtherance of the joy of their faith. Though many promises belong to thee, and thou already knowest them, and distinctly rememberest them, and daily viewest them, yet thou mayest haply not have much peace from them; but when thou hearest them again delivered in this ordinance, thou mayest have such peace from them. For God 'creates the fruit of the lips; peace,' &c., Isa. lvii. 19. And this is a thing to be added to thy knowledge, and therefore is said to be created. And how but by the lips of men uttering it? It is therefore called 'the fruit of the lips.' As, for example, thou knowest that thou art to be justified only by Christ's righteousness; and thou knowest all that can be said to manifest the truth of it, and nothing more can be added to thy notion about it; yet, for all this, the apostle says that 'this righteousness is revealed' in the preaching of the gospel 'from faith to faith,' Rom. i. 17; that is, from one degree of faith to another. This may be revealed with more evidence

to faith, to draw thy heart to trust more perfectly in it. Again, thou knowest all the particular branches of the law; thou hast a form of truth, as the apostle speaks, Rom. ii. 20; that is, a platform and table of all the sins which the law forbids, and duties which the law commands; yet when this is again taught thee out of the word, a new light may come in to discover to thee those sins which thou never as yet sawest before; a light which may divide between the marrow and the bones, and anatomize thy heart unto thee, and shew thee some new vein or artery which thou never yet sawest. In and through prophesying, the secrets of men's hearts use to be discovered, 1 Cor. xiv. 25, so that thy experimental applying, and saving knowledge of the things themselves, may be increased, although thy notions be not. For though the glass thou still lookest in be the same, yet thy light may be new and different; and so thou mayest come to see the beauty or deformity of the things represented in it; which is the difference between saving knowledge, and that which is not such.

CHAPTER II.

Of the end and design of the ministry, and of the use and necessity of ministers set apart to preach, and devoting themselves wholly to that work.

Wherefore, saith he, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—EPH. IV. 8.

The apostle having mentioned, in the 5th verse, the variety of gifts given by Christ under the New Testament, enlargeth himself about them.

1. By shewing the author of those gifts, Christ, according as it was prophesied, Ps. lxviii. vers. 8, 9, 10.

2. By enumerating the variety of those gifts, ver. 11.

3. The ends of those gifts, vers. 12, 13, 14.

1. The author of those gifts set forth, that his person is God: Ps. lxviii. 17–19, '*Thou*, the Lord God;' for none but God could have given them.

2. Then it is declared what he did for the bestowing them. 1. He descended; 2. He ascended. He descended and ascended. The apostle argues his descending from that word ascending: so ver. 9. 'Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?' Ps. cxxxix. 15. He improves that scripture against the Jews, to demonstrate that the Messiah must be humbled and laid low. He gathers a doctrine from a word, as we use to do.

And from this observe, 1. That before God exalts, he humbleth. The text says, 'first he descended.' Thus did God with his own Son, and so with us, as with David, Joseph, and any other whom he employs. And, therefore, 'humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may lift you up.'

2. Observe, that Christ descended to the lowest, and ascended to the highest place, as those two phrases import, εἰς τὰ κατώτερα, 'to the lower parts of the earth;' and his ascension is on high, 'far above all heavens;' ὑπεράνω, is *super supra*, above all beings above. The descending was into the lower parts of the earth, the ascending far above the heavens. By his descending, is meant that emptying himself, spoken of Philip. ii.; for oppositely the fruit of it is made the filling of all things. Christ was full of all, and God emptied him. He condescends to behold things here below, Ps. cxiii., but to come down below is more. And in that phrase, *the lower parts*

of the earth, he names the first and last step of his descending: not from heaven to earth only, nor to live on earth only.

1. It imports to be enclosed in the dark dungeon of the womb, Ps. cxxxix. 15, so the womb is called, and there to be hid nine months. It is an allusion to curious workmen, that work within doors their most curious works.

2. It imports to be laid in the grave, to be killed and buried, Mat. xii. 40. The Son of man shall lie in the heart of the earth three days: not in hell, the place of the damned, as the papists would have it, but in the grave, which is called the heart of the earth; as Tyre is said to be in the heart of the sea, Ezek. xxiv. 27, which yet was a city near the sea-side. From both these places, the womb and grave, Christ was raised; and the same body that had lain in these two places and dungeons, the same, says the text, ascends far above the heavens, ὑπερᾴνω; ἄνω is *above*, but ὑπερ is added, that is, *above above*, above all heavens; that is, angels, who are called heavens (as the devils are called the gates of hell, that is, the powers of hell, for magistrates sat in the gates); so Heb. vii. 26, he is said to be made higher than the heavens, that is, in his person excelling all creatures (so Eph. i. 21, his ascending is interpreted to be far above all principalities and powers, &c.). Though it is true also, he is above all heavens for place; for though in heaven, yet his throne is conspicuous there eminently.

Use. You see that, to be much abased by God, is the way to greatest glory. Fear it not; the lower the soul is laid in distress, the more comfort at last. The lower the ebb, the greater the flood.

3. His descent was so low, as none would ever think, that had seen him in his abasement, it were the same man who is now exalted. He descended so low, into so mean a condition, that when you shall see him so glorious, you would never think that that man should have been on the cross. Therefore, ver. 10, the apostle says, it is the same person; and that he who descended is the same that ascended; and so the same bodies that were miserable here, shall rise again and be glorified. It will be such an infinite glory, that men will hardly believe they are the same men. 'Know,' says Peter, 'that this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ.'

4. Observe the manner of his ascending; it is in a way of triumph. He leads captivity captive. Enemies being conquered, princes use to go in their chariots triumphantly, when from a great journey they come again to their own city and country: Ps. vii. 6–8, 'Awake,' says he, 'in thine anger, so shall the congregation encompass thee about' (that as a conqueror, for he alludes to the manner of soldiers in the field, that encompass their lord general); for their sake return then on high as a conqueror: ascend gloriously. And the leading captivity captive is but to lead the enemies captive, for the abstract is put for the concrete; for so it is used, Judges v. 12, Numb. xxi. 1.

Now then, 5, his end in ascending, as in descending, was, (1) general; (2) special.

(1.) General: 'That he might fill all things;' 1, all places, heaven and earth; therefore he comes into both, as a king that takes possession of all his dominions; 2, that he might fill all persons, he hath ascended, as the sun, to fill all with light to the top of honour; 3, this is made the fruit of Christ's descending, as well as his ascending. He became poor, that we might be rich; he became empty, that we might be filled.

(2.) The second end of his ascension is special, viz., the bestowing gifts. To this end both his ascending and descending is here brought in, for both

these were necessary for the bestowing these gifts on men; he must both descend and ascend. Ere Christ could give gifts to men, he must purchase them. Your church officers cost Christ his death, and Christ gave away himself first, to give these to you, and emptied himself to fill you. And to answer to both these, the phrase the psalmist useth concerning the gifts bestowed, signifies both his buying of them, and giving of them; and it is besides translated there by our translators, 'received gifts.' 1, it signifies to buy or purchase, *emere;* so לקח signifies, and is so used, Prov. xxxi. 16; and, 2, it signifies to give or bestow: so usually in the Hebrew, Gen. xxxii. 13, Gen. xxv. 2, it is meant to take and bring an offering. So, then, Christ's descending was to buy these gifts; his ascending, to receive and give them.

2. We may consider the variety of these gifts: 1, extraordinary; 2, ordinary: they are here jumbled together; also 1 Cor. xii. 28, and ver. 8–10. And the reason is, because the ministry, in respect of the essential things, is the same now that it was then, 2 Tim. ii. 2; therefore God blessed them, Mat. xxvii. 20, as God blessed all men at first in Adam and Eve. Now, if we know what gifts are extraordinary, and which are not, by this we shall know.

1. What ordinary gifts remain, what ordinary necessities are still in the church. We find gifts of teaching, &c., and governing, and bowels of mercy still; but no gifts of apostles, evangelists, &c., remain. Miracles, infallibility, and foretelling things as prophets (so as Agabus was), are ceased; but gifts of teaching and feeding remain. Now God continues no gifts in vain.

1. The power of apostles ceaseth, Acts xii. 2 When James was slain, there was none appointed in his room, but elders were appointed in each church, Acts xiv. 23. The election of one in Judas his place, was in conformity to the patriarchs.

2. Prophets are extraordinary, for so they are ranked, Acts xiii. 1. Paul and Barnabas were separated: so 1 Cor. xii. 28; Agabus, Acts xi. 28, 29, and Acts xxi. 9–11.

3. Evangelists; they had their calling not immediate, but from the apostles, as they from Christ, by laying on of hands. These were to perfect the work that was begun, and to settle the churches, Titus i. 5, 1 Tim. i. 3; nor were they confined to any place: Titus i. 5, 'In every city,' &c.

3. The ends of these gifts are two. 1. General: Eph. iv. 12, 'For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'

2. More special, ver. 13, 14.

The general ends are three:

1. Conversion, πρὸς καταρτισμὸν, 'for jointing in the members.' He had compared, ver. 4, the whole church to a body (as also ver. 16), and every saint that belongs to that body unto a member, the members of which body are loosened, cut off, scattered one from another, and from the head, whilst they remain unconverted to God and separated from Christ. And the fruit and success of ministers' labour is to bring all these scattered members into the right place in the body foreordained to them by God. By saints here he means the elect uncalled, for he speaks of conversion as in distinction from growth. Jointing in is bringing in the members to the body, edification is building them up, who, because they are chosen to be holy before him in love, afore the world was, Eph. i. 4, they are by anticipation called saints, and aforehand entitled by what they shall be, as young great heirs are styled lords of the places they shall have. They are called also Christ's sheep, John x. 16. Sheep not yet brought into the fold are termed sheep.

So the Corinthians, not yet converted, and so not God's people, 1 Pet. ii. 10, are termed by election and anticipation 'the people of God': Acts xviii. 10, 'I have much people in this city' yet to be called. Thus the elect of God in an age afterwards to come unborn are called our brethren and fellow-servants: Rev. vi. 11, 'And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' He speaks to the saints in heaven in one age, and of a persecution to come in an after age, viz., of the saints to be killed by the Arian or antichristian persecution, that was long after to come. Thus also Christ calls his whole body of elect, to whom the benefit of his death should extend, whether converted or yet to be converted, he calls them the saints on earth, Ps. xvi. 2, 3, John xii. 19, 20. I pray not for these apostles alone (says Christ), but for them that shall believe through their word, namely, in all ages. And the thing prayed for was, 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' So then, since the elect, though unconverted, yet by conversion are made saints, he therefore terms their conversion here the jointing in of the saints. Take it thus:

1. God had given from everlasting to Jesus Christ as head, a company of persons of mankind ordained to make a body to him, and such are their names and persons represented to him. They were and are in God's and Christ's account viewed as set all together in one, as they shall be at the last day. But by the fall of man into sin, the members of all this body are actually and in themselves loosened and dissolved from Christ, and every joint and member of that body that by foreordination was set in its proper place, seat, and socket in the body, is now rent and torn from the body, and one from another, even as the bones of men dead are in a charnel-house. Now, then, ministers are appointed by God to be in their ministry the means of converting men, and to gather them into one, and to set each elect saint in his right seat and socket of this body, which, Acts ii. 47, is called 'adding to the church such as should be saved.' Even as the angels' ministry at the resurrection shall be to gather the elect from all the four winds, such is the work of ministers now. Neither is this spoken of gathering members to a particular church, but is meant of the church universal, ver. 4, 16.

Use. Hence, then, learn that ministers are to employ their gifts and ministry for conversion of them without, as well as to build up the saints of their particular charge. Even pastors and teachers are to mind this, for you see they are thereunto appointed; neither can or should any particular church engross the gifts of their ministers to their own use only: Acts v. 19, the angel of the Lord that set them at liberty said to them, 'Go, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life;' to the *people*, *i. e.* the common sort unconverted, and choose out the most public place wherein to do it, viz., that of the temple, the place where the Jews met. And Christ used to preach there, John xviii. 20; and they were bidden to preach to them, not such truths only that may serve to build up the converted, but *all the words of this life*, that tend to conversion as well as edification. And they practised accordingly, ver. 42; and therefore saints converted and gathered into a church should not think those truths dead and dry that tend to convert, to discover to men their natural state, &c., for they tend to quicken men dead, to enlighten the elect ordained to be saints, and to joint them into Christ.

Use 2. Learn that ministers are, in a true and proper sense, and for some

ends, ministers to them without as well as to them within. You see here pastors and teachers are, as such, as well πρὸς καταρτισμὸν, as for edifying. The apostles, when they preached to cities unconverted, as Athens, Corinth, &c., were they not apostles to them, though the people owned them not as such, nor knew of it? Yet in the tendency and ordination of their office they were such to them whenever and wherever they preached, and if they converted them they were much more so to them. Yea, and when they preached, the power and presence of God went with them as such, as well to those that were to be converted, as to those that were converted, to turn them: 1 Cor. ix. 2, 'If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you, for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.' And God owned me, and looked at me as your apostle, when his power accompanied me as such in turning you to God. Now, what is there said of an apostle (who was sent to preach in several places) is true of pastors and teachers, in their circle, sphere, and place where they are called to preach. They preach as ministers to them without (whether they acknowledge them or not), as well as to their own flock. And God looking upon them as men set apart to the gospel, he accompanies them with the blessing of a minister, and useth them rather than others to convert more generally and more frequently; and though they have not that obligation for watching, or power to censure, admonish, &c., yet as to preaching, which is an ordinance of conversion, they have. Paul as an apostle had not power of censure over those that were without: 1 Cor. v. 12, 'What have I to do to judge them that are without?' No, not as an apostle had he such a power; yet to preach to them he had, and that as an apostle. And therefore it is neither on the one hand a right assertion to say that ministers, when they preach to others than their own church, are therein, and as to them, to be considered but as private men, gifted brethren, for God considers them as more, and blesseth them as ministers, and hath as well ordained them as pastors to joint in the elect, as to build up saints. Neither is it on the other side a true assertion, that because they are ministers in preaching to other congregations that hear them, that therefore they may challenge power of censure and excommunication over many congregations. The truth lies in the midst.

2. The other end of the ministry is, as to joint in the persons elect, and to make the number complete *extensivè*, so to build up and to be a means of growth unto them that are within, and so *intensivè*, to increase their graces, Acts xx. 32. When men are converted, they yet want building up to an appointed measure (which yet they know not, but God), without which they should not be saved, no more than if not converted they should not. 'Except ye be converted (says Christ), and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xviii. 3. He speaks to men converted. Now he hath appointed the word of his grace to bring them to that measure, as well as to convert; it is for building up of the body. That word is added as in distinction from that former; first, men must be brought into the body by a καταρτισμὸν, then built up. The natural body, after it hath all its members formed, then it is nursed. The ministry serves for both; the 13th verse tells us that the members are to grow up to a measure of stature, which is Christ's fulness, Eph. i. 23. Now, unto a perfection, a fulness of body,

1. There must be a fulness, a completeness of all members or parts, so as none may be wanting; and to this serves conversion, to joint in the members, and for this the ministry is appointed.

2. There must be a fulness of degrees, and proportionable growth. There must be no writhen member; and though one be smaller than the other, as

the little finger is to the rest, yet it must arrive to its stature, and the stature of each is appointed by God. And when the whole workmanship appears, and all is set together, there is an infinite beauty; and to cause them each to grow up, thereto the ministry serves. Or if you will take the other metaphor of building, as an allusion to a house supposed to be made up of living stones, as those are: 1 Peter ii. 5. 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' As suppose there were an house built of such stones, having life and growth, as the body of man hath, which being laid on a foundation, did of themselves grow up into an house, there would be in such a case, 1, the placing of the stone in the foundation, as in its proper place; and, 2, the growth of the stones to such a proportion as should make a comely building. Now, such an house are the saints: Eph. ii. 20, 21, 'And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' Now then, conversion is a building us on the foundation, a laying us in the building; and growth in grace is our growing up together into that comely structure of the whole, and both are accomplished by the ministry.

3. The third general end or use of pastors and teachers is 'the work of the ministry.' This is usually taken as brought in between both, to shew, 1, that it is a work or calling of labour, ἔργον, as in 1 Tim. iii. 13; and, 2, of service, not lordship. But I take it rather as noting out the whole work of their calling, and the whole work of their ministration, which is the immediate end of their office, as their duty, and which tends to those two other ends that follow thereon, through God's blessing thereupon, viz., that men are converted and edified. And so all particulars of it, as preaching, administration of sacraments, prayer, are included, Acts vi. 4. And thus it imports certain works to be performed by them, that make up the proper special calling of a man set apart to it; it is διακονίας, it is the work of service, as the word signifies. When James, Paul, and other apostles, style themselves servants of Christ, they intend it not in that sense wherein all Christians are servants, but they intend their being as menial household servants, that have a proper constant work every day assigned them. As officers and courtiers write themselves servants to the king in a special manner, and not as other subjects; therefore a minister is styled by this, as a name more proper to him, 'the servant of God,' 2 Tim. ii. 24; 'set apart to this work,' Gal. i. 16; Rom. i. 1, 2, 'an apostle separated;' and therefore, 1 Tim. iii. 2, he calls the very office a work, because it should be his whole work: 'He that desires the office of a bishop, desires a worthy work;' and chap. iv. 15, 'Give thyself wholly to them.' It requires the whole man; 'let him that exhorts, be in exhortation,' &c., Rom. xii. 8. *Totus in illo*, let him make it his calling, and meditate on these things, and make them his study. He must be a scribe instructed, Mat. xiii. 52, that by long use and exercise, and experience of himself and others, hath a treasure of old coin and of new, a stock of coin laid up, and an importation of new bullion. Ezra vii. 6, he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all his requests, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. He was a ready scribe, versed in it; and, ver. 10, Ezra had prepared his heart, to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it; and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. He prepared his heart to study it, and to seek out the meaning, and to teach it, and he did nothing else in comparison; and, ver. 9, the good hand of God was with him. You will, ere long, come to find that blessing in men set apart to it,

as to a calling, that is not in all the gifts of brethren that occasionally perform it.

2. The more especial ends of the ministry are:

(1.) Positive; (2.) preventive.

(1.) Positive, the preserving them in, and growing up to the unity, of the faith, &c.; (2.) preventive, ver. 14.

[1.] Positive growth in knowledge and faith, which is the cause of all other growth, and which pastors and teachers should take care of: Jer. iii. 15, 'And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding;' that is, wisdom practical and spiritual. God hath taken care, and made provision for the instruction of his people in the faith and knowledge, and set apart men, whose callings should be to perfect them therein, for which private prophesying is not sufficient. As in universities and colleges, it is an ample provision, that young students have not only public acts which themselves perform, and what by private study and conference they get, but they have tutors and professors set apart, to make it their employment to read to them. God hath taken the same care, he would not have his children read to *ex tempore;* but they have men that are as scribes, instructed in the law; and in a church, pastors and teachers are as tutors to their understanding and affections, to read constantly, and on purpose to both these ends, and to improve them in knowledge specially, which is therefore alone mentioned, because if it be spiritual, it works upon the affections; for if you grow in true spiritual knowledge, you will grow in grace: 2 Peter iii. 18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory,' &c. The church is under age, children, as ver. 13, not yet come to stature. And as great men have tutors for their children in their travel, to perfect their understandings, and observe their manners, so hath God betrusted his church in their pilgrimage with ministers, whose work and calling it is to read to you. God accounts the training up of his children as great a matter as you do yours, and therefore hath not left them to the common care one of another.

[2.] Those words, *until*, &c., Eph. iv. 13, which notes out the duration, have a double sense: 1. It means, age after age. The church is instructed more and more in truths, and their judgments by the ministry of all ages are so cleared, that in the end, through the help of their ministers, all differences will be ended, and they will have one faith, &c., and be one man, of one mind. 2. Or it signifies there being one foundation of faith necessary to salvation, even as one body, as ver. 4. And these saints being to come forth in several ages successively, which ages are to last till the day of judgment, the use and duration of the ministry is to last and continue until all those saints in every age come and arrive at this unity of the fundamentals of faith, and in the true knowledge of the Son of God, which, as necessary to salvation, God hath ordained, so as it shall be found true of all the saints at the latter day, that they all had the same unity of faith. And the ministry is to last therefore till this be performed. And truly, if we look over all stories, we find down all along that God hath performed this promise in Rome itself, which hath still truth enough to save men, though the light, indeed, in these latter days in other things is so cleared, that in denying and gainsaying, they sin against light, and so are lost, though otherwise they had truth enough to save them. So that this word *until* doth not simply note out that one full *terminus* or period of perfection that shall be at the latter day, and not until then be accomplished. For it cannot well be judged, how, at the day of judgment and in heaven, there is the unity of the faith, where faith ceaseth; but it serves to note out what was to be

a-doing all the time along in every age. The emphasis being put upon the word *all*, who, coming in a succession into the world, the ministry must, as a means hereof, continue until *all* come to the same unity. And so the meaning is, that the ministry is needful, that they all might arrive and be found to have the same faith, and to have arrived to that stature here, who, appearing together at the latter day, make up Christ's fulness. There are common principles, and foundations of all saints in all ages, as to instance in that one: 1 Peter i. 1, 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' There is an unity in the faith, and that would we have made the standard for liberty of conscience, not to dispense therein. And we may acknowledge this to the honour of councils and synods, that this we should have lost, if it had not been for ministers and councils.

(2.) The ministry is necessary to prevent errors and mischiefs; to that purpose;—

1. He shews the danger of saints without officers: 1, they are as children, the ordinary sort of them, who are easy to be deceived to take counters for gold.

2. They are as ships at sea, either riding at anchor, or such whose anchor is apt to be broken, and they exposed to be tossed in both cases.

1. If they lie at anchor in the main sea, yet if a storm come they are exposed to the fury of the waves, and to be tossed this way and that way, and to a being unsteady, not knowing what to hold. This the word περιφερεῖν imports, to be carried round about.

Or, 2, if their anchor break, then they are liable to float, and be driven any way, on rocks, heresies, and the like, and so to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Do you use to commit the ships you have but merchandise in unto ordinary sailors? No, but to men specially skilled to pilot them, to direct them in a storm.

2. He shews the advantage which evil teachers have to do mischief.

1. Many of them are men, which is spoken oppositely to the generality of saints, who are but children; and these as men can wind and cheat children as they please. There had need therefore be those that are men too, and men of God, to encounter them, that have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, as Heb. vi. 13, 14, 'For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' Such are necessary, who are able to convince gainsayers, that have depths of knowledge to answer the depths of Satan.

2. He says they are masters of their art, which is juggling, and casting false dice, who can cheat, as men at dice and cards. They can pack scriptures, so as they shall appear for their cause; they have that sleight of hand as to deceive your eye, and you have need of them that should discover them, and their juggling tricks, which being once discovered, are the most plain and easy to be avoided.

3. They are highway-side men that come stealing on you by degrees; and then with violent surprise (as having judgment in an ambushment) one opinion shall draw on another cunningly, till being wound in and encompassed about, you must needs yield. Now if the use and end of the ministry is to be as a preservative from, a bank and wall of opposition against these, then whilst you see such as these deceivers to continue in the church (as in these times you do, and they have abounded), and perceive the saints still as apt to be

deceived, there must needs be acknowledged the remaining and continuance of this ministry, and the necessity thereof, as there will be to the end of the world.

Use 1. See and consider the greatness of the benefit and favour of God vouchsafed in these donations of ministers and officers to his church, which is discovered, out of the text, in three things.

1. It is a gift, and precious gift every way; a gift not for Jehovah only, or his worship (although in that respect they are said to be a gift from the Lord, Num. xviii. 6), but it is withal added, *to you* they are given as a gift. So here says the apostle, they are gifts to men; and consider the particulars: 1. The gifts or inward abilities the men have, how rich and precious are they! It is a rich treasure, though in earthen vessels. 2. To ordain the officers suited to these gifts, the administrations as well as the gifts, these are from the Lord, 1 Cor. xii., as Num. xviii. 7, 'I have given the priest's office as a service of gift.' God looks upon the ordination itself as a gift. 3. That he should in his providence to our days, through the virtue of his ascension, raise up men thus gifted to supply his church withal, this is more than that covenant made to Noah, that harvest and spring shall not cease for ever. And, 4, God gives them his Holy Spirit, inclining their spirits to undertake this service (so contemned in the world) so willingly.

2. They are the gifts bequeathed us at Christ's ascension; and so they are his last gifts, whereby he would express his love, as Elijah at his ascending let fall his mantle, wherewith a double portion of his spirit went. Yea, they are the fruits, not only of Christ's ascension, but of his descending also; and that must be a matter of infinite moment, for the effecting which Christ must take such a journey backward and forward, from heaven to earth, and then to heaven again.

3. The donative is great in respect of the blessing which God follows all these with. Indeed, the apostle mentions it not, but citing it, referreth to all that the psalm speaks of it. Now, Ps. lxviii. 19, it is there added, he ascended to give or receive gifts for men, 'that he might dwell among them.' It fills up the allusion to an house. When Christ ascended, he became absent, going into a far country, but to the end he might visit them with his Spirit and spiritual presence. He first builds himself an house on earth ('I will build my church,' says Christ), and then he furnisheth it with all sorts of officers and furniture; and when it is thus completed, he comes down into it, and dwells in it, and delights to do so, and he there keeps open house for all comers. That exhortation, Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of God dwell richly in you,' is spoken to them as a church, ver. 15. It is an allusion to God's keeping house among his saints; and he loves they should fare richly and deliciously, and feast all that would come in among them, which is done by gifts of officers specially. This invites him to come and sup, and dwell with him, for so it runs, 'He gave or received gifts, that he might dwell.' Not but that he dwelt in these saints afore, but much more now, when he finds all his household servants about him to attend him.

4. The donative appears to be great, from the ends thereof, which are every way full; for both extensively they serve to bring into him all his members, and to make his body complete, and to add to his church such as shall be saved, and so to bring an honour to God, which consists, as a king's, in the multitude of his subjects. And it is the church's honour to increase and multiply, and the means of each person's growth is by what every one supplies. And intensively these officers and ministers do also serve to build up and cause to grow to a full stature (as here) every member also, Acts xx. 32. Paul committed to the word of God's grace to build them up, &c.;

and it is as if he had said, Now you have ministers among you, I make account you are settled; you want nothing but building up until you come to heaven, and for that I have seen you provided, and so I leave and commit you to the word of grace.

CHAPTER III.

The character and duty of a true, faithful minister of the gospel.

For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.—1 Tim. IV. 16.

These words are the close or conclusion of a set and solemn exhortation made to Timothy, and in his person to all that are or intend the ministry. The exhortation itself is continued along from the eleventh verse to this last period of it. The matter thereof wholly concerns that part of a minister's office, preaching or teaching, ver. 11; and this in distinction from ruling the church, of which in the next chapter he treats at large. And the design of the apostle is to give several directions and instructions to him, how to render himself a powerful and profitable preacher, unto the salvation of himself and others, intermixed with stimulations to care and diligence in the observation of those directions. The directions and instructions are reduced into two heads, as appears both by the entrance into that part of his discourse, ver. 12, 13, and then again in the conclusion of it in this verse.

1. He directs him to have a special care of his own personal converse: ver. 12, 'Be thou an example of the believers in word,' or good conference or discourse, 'in conversation,' or deeds answerable, &c. Christ taught with authority, and not as the scribes. For they say and do not, says Christ.

2. He directs him to furnish himself with meet abilities for preaching itself: ver. 13, 'Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.' Till I come; as if he should have said, Until when I shall afford thee other helps by conference, and the like, I think meet to give these instructions, which is all I can do by an epistle. Here is, first, the preparatory part, that he must furnish him with materials, give attendance to reading, with meditation and study, ver. 15. Now this reading must have an object, and what that is, Paul's parallel exhortation to the same Timothy resolves us: 2 Tim. iii. 16, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.' 2. As for that which is here in one word termed exhortation, there he brancheth it forth into the particulars of it: 'profitable for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect;' as you say he is a perfect artist, a perfect physician, that is skilled in all these parts of learning requisite to that function; in anatomy, in simples, in the nature and symptoms of diseases, and in the cures of them. And thus he subjoins, explaining himself; and it is exegetical, when he says, 'throughly furnished to every good work,' viz., of the ministry. As in general he terms it, Eph. iv. 12, 'the work of the ministry,' so here he expresseth his instructions, that to every good work that Timothy should be furnished, that is, to every business which belongs to that function; for so in his intention here it is to be restrained, viz., to such particular work as doctrine, reproof, &c., which he had mentioned, and whatever else there may be supposed.

3. We have the executive part, wherein he reduceth the work of preaching to two heads: 1, Exhortation, which we call application, provoking and stirring men up to practice; 2, Doctrine, teaching, explaining, confirming

divine truths out of the Scriptures in a dogmatical way. Solomon, speaking summarily of preaching in the synagogues, which he calls their assemblies, which had masters or rulers over them; or rather (as others think) interpreters of sacred Scriptures then written by himself and others, infallibly guided by one shepherd, thus Eccles. xii. 9, 'And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.' He makes the same division of the work of preaching: 'The words of the wise,' says he, 'are as goads' pricking on to holiness; and as nails, which rivet and fasten truths in men's minds, or which are as nails to hold up and support lesser chains of truth, that are consequential from those that are more fundamental, and hang upon them.

Now Paul's scope is, as to exhort Timothy to a diligence in these two parts of preaching, so, in his reading the Scriptures, to have these two parts in his eye and design. And therefore it is he joins these two with that of reading in one continued speech, because the use he would have him make of reading should be, still to sort and adjust what materially in Scripture he found serving unto these two parts of preaching, either to strengthen and thicken all sorts of exhortation, as there should be occasion, with testimonies of Scriptures; or if he were to explain and confirm any truths, to have in a readiness scriptures to do it by; that in what he speaks, though out of never so fresh and full experience, he might not seem to speak barely as a man, but should still produce the Scripture, speaking the same thing, as Paul tells us that he did: 1 Cor. ix. 8, 'Say I these things as a man? saith not the law the same also?' and as you have it, Acts xxvi. 22, 'Saying none other things than what the prophets and Moses did say should come to pass.' And the Scriptures are an abundary for all sorts of truths and experiences spiritual; for exhortations, doctrines, and confirmations of all sorts. And when a man speaks his own faith and experience, in the very meaning and sense of the Holy Ghost, it hath power in it; yea, his power to accompany it: 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,' 1 Pet. iv. 11.

4. And again at the fifteenth verse, he calls upon him to meditate on these things, which speech refers (as Chrysostom says) to the things spoken, ver. 13; and therein (say I) it refers not barely or so much to the precepts or instructions themselves, as to the things propounded in them, namely, the Scriptures read by him, that by meditation and study he should search forth the mind of God in them, and by industry and intention of mind sort what he finds therein unto exhortation and doctrine; yea, and make this his calling, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, *sis totus in illis*, 'Give thyself wholly to them.' He was not to read or study the Scriptures, as a private Christian is bound to do (which is his duty and character: Ps. i. 2, 'In the law of God he meditates day and night'), but as one that is to make provision for the comfort, direction, and instruction of others, as one who is to read to the end he may be able to teach, exhort, &c. (as was observed). He is to do these things as a man that is separated to the gospel, Rom. i. 1, who is as a public steward or provider to a great family, as both Christ and Paul compares the ministers of the gospel—Christ in Mat. xiii. 52, Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 1. A minister therefore is to be furnished with a treasure and a stock, as Christ there speaks and compares it. And it is not his duty to do this for a time, and then to think himself furnished enough; but he is to continue, to persevere in them. So in this verse, the apostle still carrying these things in his eye, enjoins him so to continue in this study, as his profiting might appear to all, ver. 15; his profiting in knowledge in the Scriptures: Gal. i. 14, 'I profited,' says Paul, 'in the Jews' religion,' in the knowledge of it, and zeal

for it, as well as his profiting in piety. And all this concerns those who, in their own intentions, have set their hearts upon the ministry as the mark of their calling, and are in preparation to it, as well as it doth concern those that actually are in the calling of the ministry.

Now then, consider, that Paul should give these directions and counsels to Timothy, who had something extraordinary in his call; it was by prophetical design, 1 Tim. i. 18, the Holy Ghost setting him forth unto it by name, even as, Acts xiii. 2, you read that Paul and Barnabas were by name at a fast. And as it should seem, this our Timothy was at a like church meeting at Ephesus, ver. 14 of this chapter, at which Paul was present, 2 Tim. i. 6; and therefore he may be supposed to have had a participation of gifts extraordinary, which was common in those times. He also had, from a child, been trained up in the knowledge of the Scriptures, 2 Tim iii. 15, and had now (when this was wrote), as a preacher, been experienced long in them; yet he calls afresh upon Timothy to give attendance to reading, meditation, or study, and to give himself, together with preaching, wholly unto these things. What pretence then can there be, either that the ministry, or the preparation to the ministry, is not now in our days as a calling, with labour and study, as other callings, to be attained?

There is a generation of men that are against acquired knowledge, or that which is sought out by study, or received from others, and would have all infused. Now consider that Timothy had the main and chief of his knowledge this way: 2 Tim. iii. 14, 'Continue in the things thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.' He had learned them of Paul. Paul, indeed, himself had it by revelation: Gal. i. 14, I indeed (says Paul) had the gospel by revelation, 'I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,' which was my special privilege. Revelation is there opposed unto two other ways of knowing divine truth: 1, by tradition, which is receiving it from man, as most do their religion; 2, by instruction and teaching, as Paul taught Timothy; and this is the way of ordinary Christians and professors, and hinders not the knowing things by faith or experience. For so Paul there tells us, that Timothy had been assured of them, and yet taught, and Timothy was by teaching to propagate them to other teachers: 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' And this may be had from men's writings, as well as *ore tenus*, by word of mouth; witness Paul's both books and parchments: 2 Tim. iv. 13, 'The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.' Books were those of other men's writings, and parchments his own (which he therefore put a mark especially upon), his own *excerpta*, or notes gathered out of others; or, because, if he had a revelation, he might forget it, he had therefore his memorials in writing. Yea, that word τὸν φελόνην (which we translate *cloak*), as Estius and others say, was a case for books, *librorum repositorium*, from φέλλος, which signifies a book, or the bark of trees on which then books were written. Daniel also, though a prophet, understood by books the period of the captivity: Dan. ix. 2, 'I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet.' Jeremiah had the prophecy by revelation; but the accomplishment Daniel understood by record, and so set himself to fast; and God recompensed his diligence in the search of this with a revelation of a more happy period, the coming of Christ in the flesh, at the close of that day's fast. And what says our Saviour Christ also? Mat. xiii. 52, 'Every scribe which is instructed

unto the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.' 1. He speaks of ministers of the New Testament, who are instructed or furnished for the kingdom of heaven; and yet, 2, he gives them the same title which they had under the Old, viz. scribes. For in this respect their calling and work is much alike, as also the means of attaining knowledge: Mat. xxiii. 34, 'I send unto you prophets, wise men, and scribes,' says Christ, speaking of the preaching of the gospel. Of Ezra it is said, Ezra vii. 6, 'He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord had given.' *Ready;* some read it *diligent*, as that which had made him ready; so you have it Prov. xxii. 29, 'a man diligent in his business.' And, Ezra vii. 10, it was added, that 'Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord;' that is, had set himself with all his might to find out the meaning of it, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. 3. Christ in that text, Mat. xiii. 52, means, that they are to be furnished with a store and treasure of knowledge, laid up aforehand, and ready at hand; and, 4, that they should have the knowledge of former ages, and so bring forth things old as well as new truths observed in present times. And therefore *decreta prudentum*, the decrees and interpretations of other ages and persons, are to be consulted. For though Christ hath promised, that whatever secret is in the Scriptures shall be uttered and known openly, and upon the house tops, Mark iv. 21, 22, yet his promise is not, that every one shall be in any one age only; but he doth this successively, and in one age one secret is discovered, that was not afore. One age sows, and another reaps, John iv. 36, 37, and day instructs night, and night day, Ps. xix. Which passages in that psalm, the apostle interprets of the teachings and writings of apostles and ministers, that go forth into all the world, Rom. x. 18. The darkest night in popery, as it received and retained much light from Augustine, whose writings preserved the foundations of the Romish church, and his light as the day of the primitive times, hath transmitted and taught us, in this day of the gospel, many truths which otherwise we should have been to seek in. And answerably, the apostle, Eph. iv., tells us, that from the time of Christ's ascension, pastors and teachers should teach the whole universal church to come, to the end of the world, ver. 13, which could not be, did not the ministry of one age afford and traduce down light unto another. Truths are Christ's current money, for one age as well as another; and some of them are stamped in one king's reign, others in another. If we should have had no more silver in this kingdom than what was brought in our age, how poor should we be! That is revealed to one, that is not to another; it was so even in those times when knowledge by revelation was most frequent, 1 Cor. xiv. 30. And how doth the apostle take such men up? 'What!' says he, 'came the word of God out from you? or came it only to you?' ver. 36, as if he should have said, God hath taught other ages and churches as well as you. And you cannot say of any one, We have no need of you; that is, of your light or help, 1 Cor. xii., the apostle to another though like purpose infers.

Whereas some men are for preaching only *extempore*, and without study, Paul bids Timothy meditate and study, and give his mind wholly to these things. Even in writing some scriptures, the penmen, though guided infallibly by the Holy Ghost, yet used study, and meditation, and art in the contriving of them. That psalm of psalms, Ps. xlv., that song of songs about Christ's kingdom, is an evidence of this; it was a poem, and of all other the master-piece, and the first rude draught of that song of songs which Solomon after wrote, and the very epitome of it. Now what is his preface to it? 'My heart is boiling up a good matter,' ver. 1 (so in your

margins); it was boiled in his thoughts (as the meat-offering in the law with oil, Lev. vii. 9), and so it was prepared by study to be offered up to God. 'I speak the things which I have made touching the King,' says the psalmist, Ps. xlv. 1, *i. e.* I speak my works to the King. He calls it, as men do their writings, his works; and dedicates it, as men do works, to the King. And again, Solomon, that wrote the Canticles and Ecclesiastes, professeth that in teaching the people he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs; he weighed things as in scales, as some read it, sought them out, and set them in order; yea, and he sought to find out words that might take, Eccles. xii. 9, 10. All which imports that it did cost study.

Yea, if it be considered, these men who decry learning and study, yet do not themselves keep to this their law; for that sound knowledge which they have or retain hath been from the ministry of this age, which hath diffused it, and lighted the whole house; and yet unthankfully they set up against them with that light they have had by retail from them. Neither can they be said to preach *extempore*, or what is at that present revealed, for they preach those things which their thoughts and speeches have been exercised in before. So as ordinarily the extemporariness is in respect of memory, for it is what comes to their memories of notions again and again meditated upon. The Holy Ghost may be supposed to bring to remembrance things before considered in study and meditation, or reading, in order to doctrine and exhortation in public. And that place of Christ's, Luke xxi. 14, 'Meditate not aforehand what to say,' is spoken in case of persecution, ver. 12, and of being brought to the bar; which is in an extraordinary season, and so hath usually extraordinary assistance. It is not spoken of ordinary sermons in the pulpit. And again, they were ordinarily taken on the sudden, and haled away to answer presently, as Christ himself was, and so could not premeditate. To comfort them, therefore, he gives forth that promise. And again, it excludes not premeditation, for the Christians studied, and studied apologies; but it is spoken against anxiety and solicitude that way, and to provoke them rather to a dependency on the Spirit to help them, though they had prepared never so much.

I shall only close this with the very conclusion of Solomon's Ecclesiastes, which hath an admonition in it full of weight: Eccles. xii. 12, 'And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.' Concerning the scope and coherence of this, I observe, 1, that he having commended the writings of sacred Scriptures (wrote by himself and the prophets inspired by God immediately) unto every man's study and search, he gives a caveat and an admonition concerning reading and studying too many other books. Those words, 'and further, by these be admonished,' seems to import only a superadded admonition; as we use to say, over and above, and, in fine, take this admonition. Others read it thus, *magis*, or *potius ex his admonitus*; that is, rather seek knowledge and instruction *ex his*, out of these books, than others that are of men's writings, and foreign to a Christian. Exercise thyself in the study of the Scriptures, and what doth best serve to open and explain them. Others (which comes all to one) paraphrase it thus, *amplius his, cave quæras*, take heed of seeking too inordinately other knowledge than what is in these, or than that tendeth to explain these. Or if you will have my mind, says Solomon, more plainly, take heed of making or reading many other books; for there is no end, no satisfaction in them. And besides, much study is wearisome to the flesh, and preys upon the best of the spirits. I observe he doth not altogether condemn reading other books, or making of them, only preferring others to these, or not counting these most excellent;

and, 2, he condemns reading too many; and, 3, he finds fault with it when it tends to decay of health and spirits. And this is to be reckoned among these vanities which he had cried down as vain, and not simply unlawful, as gardens, orchards, &c., are not. 2. He did this in his times, when the holy Scriptures were but few in comparison of that access which we have had since; for David had but Moses's law, yet you see how he studied it day and night. 3. He propounds, in the coherence of these words with the former, his own example, as he had done in other things throughout this book. He was a writer and reader of many books, perhaps the greatest in the world; and many of them were not scriptures, but of other things, and he found it vanity, as he had found the rest. It had took up too much of his time, and had shortened his days. And therefore (says he) I commend to you rather my sacred writings, than all the other books of mine or others in the world. And indeed, the holy Scriptures wrote by him only have remained, when the other are lost. Yea, 4, by the next words, 'Fear God, and keep his commandments,' he would insinuate that even study had took up too much of the man from piety and keeping up communion with God. Therefore so we should study, as that the whole and main of our souls may be in the worship of God, and doing his will, which these books teach you, says he, and none other. And last of all, I observe it is his last admonition, and he reserved it to bring it in last. For, 1, learning is of all other the best vanity this world hath. 'Wisdom,' says he, 'is better than folly,' and so is apter to draw the heart away from God and his holy Scriptures; and yet even this is a vanity, says Solomon, as well as the rest. He had before concluded in general, and made an end of reckoning up any more vanities (ver. 8, vanity of vanities, all is vanity, says the preacher), only as having forgotten one as necessary to be mentioned as any other, he brings it in with a *furthermore* (as our translators read it); as if he had said, Last of all, I give you this admonition, to the end it may the more stick with you, 'Further, my son, be admonished.' And he doth it, as you have heard, upon occasion of commending the Scripture too, as alone sufficient to make one wise in the fear of God; and all this is done to make the admonition more weighty and solemn.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the minister's maintenance.—Of the right and tenure by which he hath a claim to it.—Of the ways and means by which it is to be settled and raised.

In discoursing of the maintenance which is due to a minister of the gospel, we must first consider upon what a tenure he holds his right to it, and that consideration will guide us to find out by what rule this maintenance is to be proportioned.

1. The ministers of Christ, under the New Testament, hold their tenure of right to a due maintenance by virtue of the laws of common justice, as are practised between men and men in like affairs. By the same right on which all other stipends of places, offices, and callings in kingdoms or commonwealths are founded, these sacred officers may challenge a maintenance due and proper for them. As both civil and military offices, as that of a captain in war, or of a judge, chancellor, &c., have a stipend from the state, proportioned according to the rules of common justice current among men, so a minister ought to have a maintenance from the church by the same rule of justice, suited to the dignity and labour of his place and calling.

The stipends of offices in human governments are measured out by these rules:

1. The dignity of the place is considered, and due provision is made, that the person may have an allowance sufficient to uphold the honour of his function.

2. The expenses of the office are also rated, that the person may be furnished to discharge all that his being in such a place requires.

3. The hazard which he may undergo in his office comes also into consideration.

4. The labour and pains of the places and calling are weighed, and a due consideration had of them.

5. The breeding and education of the persons before they can be fitted for such an office is also put into the balance.

6. An account is made how beneficial and useful a person in such an office is to the government.

All these things, in all sorts of offices, are valued among men by the common rate that justice current among men doth put upon them. And all these considerations, so far as they are found in this sacred office of the ministry (as they are all), are by that standard of common justice, and customs of men in like callings, to be regarded, and this office is to have its stipend answerably proportioned. Now that this calling holds upon these tenures of common justice is evident, because the pleas used in the New Testament for the maintenance of Christ's ministers are founded upon this claim, and this right and tenures are pleaded therein.

1. Let us consider the text: 1 Cor. ix. 7–14, 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and he that thrasheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' Mark the instances which he brings: 1, of soldiers, and their places in war; 2, of planters of a vineyard; 3, of a shepherd. And he adds this expression, 'Say I these things as a man?' He insists on the examples and customs of men in the like cases, the same common rules of justice holding in this case as there. And (as Pareus observes) he also pleads all sorts of titles of justice which serve to strengthen the fundamental title: 1, he mentions the customs of men in like callings, as in that of soldiers, &c.; 2, he takes notice what natural justice it is, to plough and sow in hope of a crop, and to reap in hope of eating the fruits of the labour; 3, he remarks the moral equity of the judicial law, which forbids to muzzle the mouth of the ox which treadeth out the corn; and though it would be lawful to do so under the gospel, yet God thereby taught a rule of common justice to be observed among all callings of men (for this was not a type). And this among other things God taught by it, that in justice a reward is due to a labourer, since it is so to a beast; and the apostle herein pleads the justice, not the

type of the thing. 4. The apostle considers the equality of commutative justice, and what the laws of exchange require, that value should be given for value, ver. 11; and though indeed he doth not say *our spiritual things*, as he says *your carnal*, yet he plainly expresseth that it is we who sow them. He in justice requires only *parva pro magnis*, small things for great; for the fruits and benefits of this calling are to be considered, which exceed in proportion all carnal things whatever. 5. The apostle takes notice of the equity of the ceremonial law, ver. 13, 14.

2. The other text of Scripture to be considered is 1 Tim. v. 17, 18, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, The labourer is worthy of his reward.' 1. He speaks of honour to be paid to them. Now, honour was a due as well as tribute, which was exacted, Rom. xiii. 7; and it was due in justice. 2. He tells us that the labourer is worthy of his hire; every word which he useth expresseth matter of justice: 1. Labourer; this shews that to the work in justice the reward is to be proportioned, Rom. iv. 4. 2. The apostle expresseth a worthiness of his work, that it deserves a valuable consideration, that a labourer is worthy of his hire. 3. The apostle mentions hire, whereby he intends a covenanted reward, such as is set by mutual agreement; so *μισθος* signifies. 4. The words are *τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ*, of his hire, *i.e.* which he in justice may call his.

3. This was also the first institution of Christ: Mat. x. 9, 10, 'Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.' And to this institution of Christ the apostle plainly refers in both these fore-cited texts, 1 Cor. ix., 1 Tim. v. From all this there flows these corollaries.

1. In the estimate of Christ in his institutions, there is a great difference between the duty of relieving the necessities of our poor brethren, and this duty of maintaining the ministers of the gospel. For though the relief of the poor be an act of spiritual justice, into which, by spiritual obligations in relation to God and Christ, we are bound, yet the maintenance of ministers is farther due by the rules of all human common justice that are found among men; so as rules of human justice exact it, and rules of human justice proportion it according to the desert and merit of the thing. But the poor have not power to claim relief by such a title, for their tenure is merely from the obligation which the gospel lays upon us. I find indeed a collection for the saints at Jerusalem to be called a debt, Rom. xv. 27; but it was a peculiar case, for from this church of Jerusalem came the word of the gospel, and the blessings of spiritual things to the Romans and other Gentiles; but this word did not come so from Corinth, 2 Cor. xiv. 36, or any other church. And again, all communication of benefits to the poor is matter of mere service to God, 2 Cor. ix. 12; nay, it is called acts of grace, 2 Cor. viii. 19. But this is not merely so, for it is both a gift and a sacrifice. And then besides, the object of this communication to the poor is a certain condition of men, which wisdom must discern and judge of, and proportion succours accordingly; but the object of this act of ministers' maintenance is a settled calling and labour of men, in rewarding which justice must be shewn. The rule of measuring out collections for the poor is as God hath blessed men, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And that instance is only concerning such a collection; but now in all cases and respects, as the labourer is worthy of his hire, so a minister deserves a due subsistence.

2. If the maintenance of a minister is thus to be regulated by the common

rules of justice in use and custom, and which are found in like cases, then it is also to be rated according to these considerations to which a regard is had in all like callings. 1. It is to be considered that honour is due to ministers on account of the dignity of their office and work: 1 Tim. v. 17, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine.' 2. The necessary charges of their office are to be considered, for by it they are bound to be charitable and hospitable unto others. 3. The hazard to which by their calling they are exposed, is to be had in consideration. As it is a spiritual warfare, so as soldiers who stand in the forefront of the battle are most open to wounds or death, so ministers in times of persecution are most obnoxious to danger. 4. The labour of their calling is considerable: it is inward especially, 1 Tim. v. 17; it is the labour of the mind, which spends the best spirits and preys on the vitals, and therefore it is the greatest labour of all other. 5. Their education and breeding for this calling is long and expensive, and men's pensions in other places and callings are valued in the consideration of what is requisite to them. 6. The more and greater benefits any calling brings, the more it is prized and valued. If ministers bring in spiritual blessings to you (as they do), it is but equal that they should partake in those carnal blessings which you enjoy. We may in justice plead all these considerations, and require as good and equal justice as is found to be distributed with respect to any other the like callings among men. The rule of justice is not what the custom of men is to give to ministers, but it is to be taken from the measures of proportion which men observe in respect to other callings, which have the fore-mentioned resemblances to this of the ministry.

3. The party himself who is this sacred officer of Christ, hath a right and power to set a value on the merits of his office, as well as the people who are the other party; in all like callings it is so. Therefore neither the deacon nor the people can oblige the minister to accept what proportion of allowance they please to set him; but he himself hath a right and power to plead for and claim a just, valuable stipend, and accordingly to rate what his office deserves. It is not left therefore to the wisdom of either the deacons or the people to adjust the value of it. Therefore the apostle in reference to this maketh use of the word ἐξουσία, which implies not only *power*, but *authority*. He useth the word three or four times on this occasion, 1 Cor. ix. 4–6; and he expresseth a right, a title, and dominion which he had over them in this respect, 1 Cor. ix. 12; whereby it is plainly asserted that the people have not a power over the minister, to oblige him to take whatever they are pleased to give, but that he hath authority to claim what is justly due to his calling. For not only apostles had this power here spoken of, ver. 12, but ordinary officers; for his words are, 'If others be partakers of this power over you,' and by *others* he means ordinary ministers; for the false apostles preached *gratis*, not requiring any consideration.

4. Unless there were something peculiar found in this calling of the ministry which is not to be found in any calling else, unless there were found some gospel duty obliging and requiring ministers to forego their right (which in justice is to be insisted on by them) and to give themselves up to the free arbitrary discretion of the church and her deacons, or unless there were some certain proportion set by God under the New Testament as there was under the Old, a mutual covenant between minister and people is the best and most effectual course to adjust this affair. This is evident from the instances of which the apostle makes use, 1 Cor. ix. 7. Unto a labourer in a vineyard a set penny is due, Mat. xx. 2; soldiers also have their fixed pay. The word used by the apostle, which is ὀψωνίοις, signifies a soldier's stipend, as

Beza observes. And when the apostle says, 1 Tim. v. 18, that the labourer is worthy of his hire, that which he is worthy of is called his hire. The word μισθος signifies *merces pacta*, a reward fixed by mutual agreement, and therefore they were not to stand to the courtesy of those who were to give it them. Nor doth the apostle use this expression as a proverb only, but as a rule which is to be observed. What is said, James v. 4, of the hire of the labourers, hath respect to Deut. xxiv. 15. The instance of shepherds also hath a regard to what was the usage in Laban's time, when great men had others under them to look after their flocks, and agreed to reward them for their labour by giving them some of the sheep which they kept, Gen. xxx. 31. And to this custom the apostle alludes when he says, 'Who feedeth a flock,' &c. From all this it necessarily follows that the minister's stipend is not to be left to arbitrary determinations; but as the minister and the church which calls him are joined together by a mutual covenant, so his stipend is to be settled by a like covenant, according to the dictates of nature's equallest rule. By this way all complaints will be avoided, all things will be preserved in peace between all parties, whether people or officers, and the one will be tied to the other most fastly by their own cords. I shall now examine what is pleaded for leaving the minister's maintenance unto the free and voluntary contribution of the people. 1. Any instances out of the Old Testament to this purpose do not seem to be convincing. What is moral indeed in them holds, and accordingly the apostle brings them, not to be measures of proportioning a maintenance for ministers in like manner, but he only refers to the moral justice of them; that as the Levites lived wholly on the altar, so it was but just that ministers should live wholly on the gospel, *i. e.* that they should not live on their own charges, but on what they have for preaching the gospel, that they should not live on their own means, but upon that which comes in by the gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. But the particle *so* doth not mean that they should live after the same way and manner, but only that there was justice and equity for one as well as the other. And so our Lord Jesus Christ ordained, Mat. x. 9, 10, so that according to that common rule of justice, 'the labourer is worthy,' &c., Christ formed his institution with respect to the ministry of the gospel. They were indeed extraordinary disciples, and therefore what he says to them as such, Mat. x. 8, is not a rule of perpetual obligation, but he afterward alters this rule with respect to ordinary ministers, in saying that 'the workman is worthy of his meat,' Mat. x. 10; and he adds these further, Luke x. 7, 8. Thus as Christ in Mat. xviii. ordains the institution of a church, so here he ordains a rule for the maintenance of ministers. But to answer any objections that may be brought from instances under the Old Testament, it is to be considered that there is not the same way now for the maintenance of the ministers of God as there was then, but there are many differences between one and the other. 1. The Levites then were a tribe set apart from their birth by God himself, and accordingly God says that he would be their portion, Num. xviii. 20. All these dues therefore which the people paid to them were first paid to God, and he gave them to the Levites, so that they held them not by any law of human justice, but by tenure from God; for as these dues were paid to God, so he gave them unto them. But maintenance is due in justice to ministers as they are labourers, by the same rule which Christ gives, that the labourer is worthy of his hire; and yet too because ministers are an ordinance of God, and they serve to the worship of God; therefore offerings made to them are sacrifices to God, and thus they are a gift also as well as a due. But yet so as the first object to whom the due is paid is the minister, not God, though they communicate to him for God's sake, Gal. vi. 6; *i. e.* that you

may have an ordinance to serve to God's worship, be sure to maintain it; and therefore this giving to a minister is called sowing to the spirit, when all other expenses are called sowing to the flesh, Gal. vi. 8. 2. This chief maintenance of the Levites under the law was not left to the freedom of the givers, nor did God trust men to assign the proportions of their maintenance, but he did it himself, since he appointed not only free offerings but tithes. There was a portion set for them, and a fifth part of every man's estate went one way or other for the maintenance of the Levites. To leave all therefore only to free offerings now, and to cut off set stipends or tithes, is to put us ministers into a worse condition than the Levites were. And surely God hath not bound us to these hard terms. What peculiar bond hath God laid upon us more than upon men in any other callings, that we, who have both the faith of ordinary men, and the spirits and necessities of men, should yet depend merely on free-will offerings? I am sure, as this answers not our type, so neither doth it take in the rules of justice whereon a minister's maintenance is founded. 3. The minister's maintenance is not left to the wisdom of the deacon; for the distribution of the free-will offerings of the people among the priests was by rules of justice, and according to equality of proportion, respect and measure being had to their labours, 2 Chron. xxxi. 15, 16. And now then, to make us wholly to depend on the people's free-will offerings, and that the deacon should dispense them according to his wisdom, would be to make our condition worse than that of the Levites was then, who had treasurers that were faithful to their charge, Neh. xiii. 12, 13. 4. It was necessary in those times that some should distribute the church's treasure, because the tithes that were needful for the services of the temple were brought into a common bank, and therefore it was necessary that some should be ordained to distribute it. There was a necessity of doing it, and it was not left to discretion. So here now in the times of the gospel the same ground holds still, that so far as anything comes in by common collection for a particular use, the deacons ought accordingly to gather it for such a use, and as the church's hands, to convey and distribute it. This office, mentioned in that fore-cited text, was matter of needful order, not of type or significancy only, as many things were in the ceremonial law, which, the reason of them ceasing, the use of them is abolished. For (as Zepperus says) *Ratio legis si cesset ipsa lex cessat, non secus atque animâ expirante, homo moritur; ratio enim anima legis esse dicitur:* if the reason of the law ceaseth, the law itself ceaseth, as the soul expiring, the man dies; for reason is said to be the soul of the law.

Nor doth any place or argument out of the New Testament evince anything contrary to my foregoing assertions. There is mention indeed of sacrifices to God, Heb. xiii. 16; but yet it is a question whether ministers' maintenance be spoken of there, or if it is, it hath that name because it is a maintenance given to uphold God's worship. And yet still it is given by way of human justice to the minister, who is the person which performs that worship. It is not given first to the Lord, and then to the minister or church, but to the minister for the Lord's sake, and so it is an honouring God with our substance, and a sowing to the Spirit, and to spiritual ends; for though it be given to God first, yet that is not inconsistent with its being given to the minister, but both may stand together, and it is still a debt in human justice to the person, the officer. Paul calls it a gift, Philip. iv. 16, 17. But this doth not import that he had no power to claim it, or that it was not due to him, but he calls their offerings made to him a gift comparatively to the omission of other churches, who, owing the same duty, yet had not done it.

Or he calls it a gift with respect to their free doing it; and I think the nature of the thing hath a mixture both of debt and of a gift; and as the way of saving us, in the gospel, is compounded both of mercy and justice, so this maintenance of a minister is an act of justice and free love too, yet so as that the free love of the persons, both in the contribution and distribution of it, must come up to the rules of justice; and we ourselves may claim it, and set the due rate and value on it, and fix its right proportion: 'Have we not power,' &c., 1 Cor. ix. 6–8, 2 Thes. iii. 8, 9. Thus to give to the maintenance of a minister is a mixed duty, for the apostle gives the rules and urgeth the grounds and reasons both of common justice and also of love. He urgeth the gospel consideration, that it is a sacrifice to God, and a sowing to the Spirit, Heb. xiii. 16, Philip. iv. 17, 18. And so he calls it likewise a sowing to the Spirit, Gal. vi. 6–8. And yet likewise he asserts a power to claim it as a due, 2 Thes. iii. 8, 9. He urgeth both arguments, that if gospel considerations did not move them, the plain reasons of common justice might prevail, that they might consider the just right and claim that ministers have to it, and might be influenced thereby. 'Have I not power?' &c., says he. He urgeth the duty upon them from the rules of common justice. We are called by men, and if we are not justly dealt with by them, we have power to leave them. The apostle's case was otherwise, who was called by God, and so was to trust God for means of livelihood, and to work with his hands, and on all accounts whatever to preach the gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 16. 2. The contribution of maintenance to a minister is left free, and it is fit it should be so, 1, that it may be an exercise of grace in the people, and an offering of sacrifice to God. And such a freedom agrees with the genius of the gospel, and is suited to the nature of its services, which requires a willing people. 2. This act is left to the freedom of the people, that they may have an opportunity of exercising their love, to the increase of the grace of love in them. Whilst the minister enlargeth their hearts, they stretch their purses for him. 3. Hereby ministers avoid the reproach of preaching for lucre; hereby the calling of the ministry becomes more honourable in the eyes of men, when they see that it is not mercenary, and that a minister hath not set fees as others have. The performance of this act is left to the liberality of the people, that they might have an opportunity of sowing more plentifully to the Spirit, Gal. vi., even as men, when they would have more, they use to leave it to the liberty of the giver. 6. It is free, that the duty might come under a more transcendent rule than that of mere justice, though still the act is to be regulated by justice. Thus, that children should maintain their parents when poor, is a duty which nature and justice requires, and the relief and supplies should be in proportion to their abilities; yet justice ordinarily sets not the rate and proportion, because the duty is also farther an act of piety, and so left to the good nature and disposition of the person, 1 Tim. v. 4, 7. In this duty you are yet to have a distinct view of justice in your eye. You must pay it in a just proportion, not only to the necessities of your officers, but suitably to the dignity of their place, and the greatness of their labour. Though you are free in communicating it, yet a law of common justice must run along in the distribution; for if it be due by rules of justice, the proportion in distribution is to be regulated by justice, for the proportion is just as well as the thing. As the maintenance is due to the minister, so you ought to give so much or so much, as by rules of justice his office and work are valuable, so that what you should give, as to the proportion of it, is not left to your wisdom, or the discretion of your spirits, but must go by a just rule. A double maintenance therefore is due to elders that labour in the word, on account of the honour of their place, as the priests had more than the

Levites, and the proportion still must be with respect to the labour, Gal. vi. 6. He speaks of proportioning out what they gave to teacher as well as pastor, and to one teacher as well as to another, by a rule of justice. Thus, though Paul less needed maintenance than Peter, who was married, and the apostle could and did earn his living, yet, he says, he had as much power to exact the same stipend in justice that Peter had, 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5. Paul's meaning is, not that he would marry, on purpose to shew that he had the power to put the church to more charges; but his intent is to shew that, though single and unmarried, he had power to require what might maintain a wife, for he had the same right to the thing as Peter had. And suppose Paul could live without it, yet his right and claim to it was not lessened thereby, for 'no soldier goes to war at his own charges.' His design, then, was not to tell them of his being in a single condition, but to urge to them the dignity of his place, and to lay before them the merits of it, and to remind them of the good which he had done them, and what he had deserved at their hands, and to draw up an account of his labours, as a thing in justice, which they ought to respect in proportioning a maintenance accordingly; and to convince them, that if they did it for other ordinary officers, they ought rather to do it for him: 1 Cor. ix. 11, 12, 'If others have this power,' &c. So that he measures it by justice; and though he had no wife, and so had not the same urgent necessities of a family as others had, yet he had a power to require the maintenance that was due to his office and work, and might exact the same which others did, whatever his condition was, 1 Cor. ix. 6. So that it is not only the necessities of the minister's condition that is the rule by which his maintenance is to be measured and proportioned, but the rule of justice takes place here also as a rule of proportion, and it is to be considered what his office and labour deserves. The measure of the maintenance is not therefore to be varied by men's necessities. No; the maintenance of the minister is not thus to be determined by the wisdom of the people, but they are to be regulated by a rule of justice in this case, and the calling, the work, and the benefit are to be considered by them, as these things are considered in all callings else. Let us take but the instance which the apostle gives, 1 Cor. ix. 7; what soldier ever was there, though he had a great estate, who would not require his pay, and when he ventures his life for the public good, expect to live upon the public charge? And the apostle tells us it is but just that ministers should live of the gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 14. They may, if they please, generously remit and forego their right, as Paul did, and perhaps, in some cases, it may be their duty to do it; but this, their right, is no more subjected to any man's discretion to determine concerning it, than their estate in the world, whether personal or real, is. For after that rate, a minister who hath worldly means might be obliged to give more than other men, and yet, besides, to labour for nothing; but yet still, a minister may, upon evangelical ground and reasons, forego his right, as Paul did. Now, the proper way and means of raising a due and competent maintenance for a minister is next to be considered, and I shall deliver my thoughts about it in a few words.

1. There ought to be set means of a competent maintenance established by mutual covenant and agreement, that the pastor and the people may be mutually engaged. And this will take place in a way of justice.

2. There ought, likewise, to be an enlargement of his maintenance by free-will offerings. This is a natural way, and since the apostle urgeth this duty, both from reasons of nature and justice, 1 Cor. ix. 7–12, why should not both of them be observed? Both these ways of maintenance were appointed for the Levites, who, as they had cities for their settled inheritance, and

fixed tithes, so they had free-will offerings from the people. And indeed, these two methods joined together are advantageous to both parties, for as the first secures a certainty of maintenance for the minister, so the other makes him to have a dependence on the love and affections of the people; and as by the one provision is made that the minister may have no cause to complain, so by the other opportunity is given to the people of exercising their graces, and of shewing their love and thankfulness.

CHAPTER V.

Whether the sacrament of the Lord's supper ought to be administered on every Lord's day.

Acts ii. 42, '*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,*' compared with chap. xx. 7, '*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.*'

I will now but open the words so far as to give a hint to that point which I mean to discourse of out of them; which is this, whether the Lord's supper be to be administered every Lord's day, for which these places use to be alleged.

When Christ ascended, he bid his disciples teach those whom they converted to do whatsoever they commanded them, Mat. xxviii. 20 Now this book of the Acts records what practices the apostles taught the churches, and into what forms they set them. And therefore, what we find the churches to have practised, upon ordinary grounds, that we take for a command of Christ. Therefore is this preface on purpose made to this book, Acts i. 2, how that after his resurrection Christ had given commandments to his apostles, on purpose to credit the practices or acts of these apostles, as the title is, as conformed to these commandments. And in this 42d verse of chapter ii. you have the solemn standing worship, which the first church continued in, as a pattern to all that should follow. Which standing worship consists of four ordinances, which are together reckoned up nowhere but here, as all church officers nowhere but Rom. xii.: as, 1, apostles' doctrine; 2, fellowship; 3, breaking of bread; and, 4, prayers. That by apostles' doctrine is meant preaching, all do agree; and that by prayers are meant the public prayers, which, 1 Tim. ii., the apostles gives order for, not occasional, but standing, is not questioned; but only what is meant by κοινωνία (translated *fellowship*) and breaking of bread is in question. For the clearing of this,

1. It is certain that all the practices mentioned here are ordinances, for three of them being so, it had been heterogeneal to mention a fourth thing with them, which was not so; and, 2, they are ordinances of a sort, that is, of which for their continual practice there is like reason; for it is said, they all continued in them.

Now for a more particular explication of these two words.

1. The word κοινωνία, fellowship, refers not to apostles more than κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου, breaking of bread, doth, and therefore it is ill translated, apostles' fellowship. I find the sacrament called κοινωνία, *communion*, 1 Cor. x. 16; and distribution to poor brethren is called κοινωνία also, or *communication;* so some render it, 2 Cor. ix. 13, ἁπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας, *liberality in communicating.*

2. We find giving to the poor, called breaking of bread to the hungry, Isa. lviii. And the sacrament also is so called: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The bread we break,' &c. Now, what must determine which is which? Surely the manner of the use of the phrase. Now, though the Lord's supper be called communion, yet it is, *cum hoc adjecto*, still with this addition 'of the body of Christ' to distinguish it. But I find κοινωνία, when only and alone used, as here you see it is, to be still put for distribution, and for that alone; thus, in three places, as 2 Cor. ix. 13, 'For your liberal distribution unto them;' Rom. xv. 26, κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι, 'to make a certain contribution;' and Heb. xiii. 16, 'To communicate, forget not.' On the other side, I find breaking of bread, when simply and barely so expressed, put for the sacrament, 1 Cor. x. 16, but never used for giving to the poor, but *cum adjecto*, with an addition, as, break thy bread to the hungry. Hence, therefore, κοινωνία, here translated *fellowship*, is certainly to be understood of distribution, and so to be translated. And this fitly explains all, for then breaking of bread is the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and if phrases must determine it, the Syriac interpreter thus translates it the Lord's supper, and he best knew the use of the phrases. And so you have all the four standing ordinances in the church enumerated together, and no more, whereas else you must want one, as not mentioned.

Obj. But the phrase, breaking of bread, as simply spoken, is used for common eating together.

Ans. It is true, but it is not so here; for that eating is not a church-ordinance, and all the rest here are; and where the phrase, breaking of bread, simply taken, is used, it is not used for distribution to the poor; and, therefore, even that breaking of bread which is mentioned (ver. 46) cannot be so understood of distributing bread to the poor.

And if it be further said, that their love-feasts are there meant, and so here in this verse, and so it may be taken still in distinction from breaking of bread to the poor; the answer is,

1. That their love-feasts were for poor and rich together, and taken up and used as common signs of Christian love, and therefore so called; and not in order or respect to the poor only or chiefly.

2. Their love-feasts were no church ordinance, and so not reckoned up here among church ordinances. Christians might privately feast, and providentially, as they met, eat together, as a sign of love, as in the primitive times they often did; but not in the way of an ordinance, or a standing ordinance, as the breaking of bread here certainly is. When they came to make an ordinance of their love-feasts, the apostle rejects them: 1 Cor. xi. 22, 'Have you not houses to eat and drink in?' And ver. 23, 'I have received no such thing;' and, ver. 34, he infers, 'If any man hunger, let him eat at home.' And, ver. 33, he calls the Lord's supper eating together: 'When you come together to eat, tarry one for another.' He speaks of it as the only eating that was to be in a church as a church ordinance; and so excludes common eating to slack hunger from being an ordinance, bidding them in the next verse to do it at home. And therefore says he, 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The bread which we break, is it not the body of Christ?' which is spoken by way of eminency and singularity, τὸν ἄρτον, as being that bread, and only that, which we break as a church; as, in like manner, he had, in the 11th chapter, called the Lord's supper eating together, namely as they were a church. And therefore here, Acts ii., there is also an article put, breaking τοῦ ἄρτου, of that bread; so 1 Cor. xi. 26. Now then, come to Acts xx. 7; the breaking of bread there is used in the same sense, namely, of the sacrament also.

1. Not of alms; that is never called breaking of bread, but with distinction, *to the hungry*, &c.

2. Not of common eating; for that not being an ordinance, no meeting on the Lord's day could be denominated from that; on which day all church meetings are for ordinances only, as principally to hear the word. And to have said, the disciples met to break bread, meaning common bread, is all one as for us to say, the church meets to salute and see each other, when principally we meet to hear the word, &c.

Now, then, breaking of bread being not here to be understood of alms, nor of ordinary eating, it must needs be meant of the sacrament; seeing there is no other breaking of bread, especially as an ordinance of a church assembly, spoken of in Scripture.

And, 3, this is there spoken, to shew what their custom was to do continually, *ex more;* and therefore it is all one as if he had said, they met every Lord's day.

For,

1. It is spoken of as a ground of Paul's stay seven days, that he might preach to them, as knowing that they would meet on the Lord's day for this occasion, as they were wont.

2. It being customary to meet on that day for other ordinances, as preaching the word, &c. (for so it was in primitive times), he would rather have mentioned that for which Paul knew they were of necessity to meet, than what was used but one Lord's day extraordinarily; if this had not been as customary an ordinance on that day practised as any other.

3. This is written and mentioned, though but in an hint, to shew their practice, and so the apostles' institution; for they taught them to do whatever Christ commanded. And this we see they did on that day, and no other.

The question which I shall discuss and handle upon occasion of these words is this, Whether every Lord's day the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be administered? My method shall be,

1. To prove by reason, that there is somewhere an institution for it to be found.

2. Further to inquire into these scriptures, and see whether they do not hold it forth. But, first, let us see what may be done by reason, in the point.

Before I come to those assertions which I would by reason establish, I will, for explication's sake, premise something about the differing rules and ways that God hath ordered about the determining such circumstances of his worship as this is; the consideration whereof will be useful to this and other like points.

It is agreed upon by all here, that no such circumstance is to be determined by the mere will of any man or men, and that God hath left no circumstance of worship so to be determined, especially not any so conducible to edification as this must needs be, How often the Lord's supper is to be administered. And, therefore, the prescriptions and laws of church governors, from will and authority, or of a whole church, in determining such circumstances, we reject; as that for which the word gives no commission or allowance, namely, not in such a manner to command a determination. And in that sense only it is that we say, no circumstance of an ordinance is left unto man; that is, not to men's wills, or the authority of others. Hence it is, that for all such circumstances we do inquire into other rules, either prescribed in the word, or the light of nature and right reason from the word; and we find two sorts of rules given us to determine them by.

1. A direct word of institution, or example, which we are obliged to follow, as in the Old Testament, to sacrifice twice a-day. This circumstance was an institution. So for us to pray twice a-day, I conceive an institution; and this circumstance is set by God himself. Now all such rules do properly belong to the second commandment, wherein God took upon him to give us rules, by way of institution, which are by men unalterable.

2. The second sort of rules to determine circumstances of the times, &c., of an ordinance, are such as depend merely upon occasions and other circumstances, according as the various conditions of churches and the customs of places do require; which therefore, for the particularity of them, are undetermined by God, and left to the wisdom of every church to determine them, as occasions shall alter or vary; yet still, not by their mere will, but by other more general rules given in the word, or the light of nature, to order such circumstances, in all that variety of occasions that shall happen and fall out. As, for example, that this congregation should meet in the day-time, is more for the good and benefit of it, than to meet in the night; which yet, for the primitive Christians, in regard of the circumstance of persecution, might be more convenient (as haply that meeting, Acts xx. 6–8, when Paul preached so late, as he continued his speech until midnight), was (as some think) in that respect.

Now the Scripture hath not determined the night of the Sabbath for public assemblies, or the day-time, peremptorily; because, according to variety of circumstances, churches might meet on either, as their wisdom should judge best; yet so as their wisdom is to be guided by some general rule of nature, or of the word, in determining this; such as is that rule, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 'Let all be done for edification;' that is, let all be done with such circumstances, as with which the ordinances being accompanied, shall serve best to edify the church. Now, as our case stands, the day-time seems best for our edification by the ordinances, because our spirits are more fresh in the day than in the night; but to them whose meeting in the day costs them their lives, and the loss of ordinances, and all, and though the night was in other respects inconvenient, yet, better then than not [at] all, or than in the day, wherein to have often met would have been for destruction, not for edification.

So now for us, as to what hour of the day we should meet. About nine o'clock is the best time, considering the time of preparation before, and the weakness of many, and the due times of repast and meals to come after; and that the church should not meet in the afternoon presently after meals, is the best also for edification, to prevent dulness, or hurt by indigestion, &c. Now to these hours (as circumstances stand with us) we are determined, not by an invariable institution, but by a general rule, 'Let all be done for the most edifying;' which falls out with us to be these individual hours, which haply to an individual church would not; and so the determining it to this hour is not wholly human, for men are bound to determine by rules; yet not wholly or merely divine (as particularly pointing them out, as by an institution other circumstances are), but divine in respect of a general rule, and also human in respect of the particular application; man's wisdom being left to consider these circumstances, and so to apply these rules.

Now all such rules about such circumstances do belong to the third commandment, which merely takes order for the manner of worship, and the inward and outward circumstances of it; that all be done (in respect of such circumstances) for the best advantage, so that God's name be not taken in

vain, in the least degree. To give an instance or two in the same kind, one in an occasional ordinance, and another in a continued:

1. For the time of administration of circumcision, under the old law, which was an occasional ordinance, there were two rules given by institution:

(1.) How oft it was to be administered; but once, and never to be reiterated.

(2.) There was the fixing also of a particular day whereon it was to be administered, namely, the eighth day. But now,

(3.) If the query were made, on what hour of the eighth day? that was left to rules of the third commandment, which prescribe what was most convenient in respect of outward circumstances. It was left to such rules as the third commandment prescribes, and left to wisdom to apply.

So for preaching the word, which is a continual ordinance, the circumstance of time was fixed by institution, that it should be used every Sabbath day, Acts xv. 26. But how much, or how often on that day? That the particular occasion was to decide, as there were more or fewer men of gifts to speak and prophesy, or as the need of the hearers variously required.

Now that you may yet further understand with what difference these two commands proceed, in the differing rules which they give, about such circumstances of time, I will, by way of further explication, give you it, in these two particulars.

1. Concerning all such rules which come under the second head, and appertain to the third command, take this general rule for certain, about them, to the end you may discern them from institutions which belong to the second command (I speak not now of such circumstances as the light of nature dictates, which also belong to this third command), the rule is this:

That only such circumstances of the times of worship which would necessarily vary through new and differing occasions, or various and several sorts of outward circumstances which men's conditions are cast into, and so were necessarily (as occasion should fall out) to be left to churches by wisdom, and consideration of such circumstances to determine, that these, and these only, are left to be determined by those general rules belonging to the third command.

Thus, 1, the time of all occasional ordinances is (for aught I know) left unto men to determine by those general rules. And there is no rule given for them under the gospel, but this, when an occasion calls for them, that is, their season, and that individual time which is the fittest in all circumstances for the ordinance to be administered in. Thus, when to have a baptism, and to fix the time, it is not now, as in the old law, fixed to the eighth day, which was in a type, but is left to the church to determine; only, it is not to be deferred longer than circumstances do in wisdom require. Thus, in admonition and excommunication, what the fittest season is doth depend on circumstances, and the church is to judge.

2. This also is the rule, for set ordinances themselves, so far as they are occasional, and setting aside their necessary fixed station. The word preached is a set ordinance instituted for every Lord's-day; yet, if the question be, how much, how long, or how often in the day, or how often on the week besides; no rule can determine it, but as occasion and need of the hearers require and call for, and their vacancy will permit; so that such times for any ordinances do only come under those general rules, which are capable of new and fresh occasions, that shall call for them and make them seasonable at one time more than another, and are not capable of a set rule.

I add unto this, this other distinction also, for explication:

That whereas *regula generalissima*, the most general rule and command belonging to the third commandment, about the ordering such various cir-

cumstances, is that famous apostolical canon, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 'Let all things be done to edifying;' and whereas those other rules whereby God hath, by an institution, fixed set times for worship, in the second or the fourth command, are said to be for edification also, yet, between that edification which flows from God's institution of a circumstance, and that which follows upon a prudent ordering outward circumstances, there is an answerable broad difference. The edification which follows upon God's institution of a circumstance, is such as is through God's appointment intrinsecally conjunct with, and inseparable from, the ordinance itself, and immediately accompanying it, from which we are to expect a special blessing, together with the blessing of the ordinance; and so it affords such a kind of edification as the ordinance itself does, in its measure, being as directly sanctified to edify, as the ordinance itself. But that edification which follows upon the right ordering of outward circumstances, which are left to men to determine by those general rules, is but an edification extrinsecal to the ordinance, and but secondary and subserving to it; these circumstances being so to be ordered, that the ordinance may give forth that edification which God hath appointed it unto, with the most advantage in all outward respects; and this is that edification which the apostle means, when he says, 'Let all be done to edifying.'

Hence, by the way of corollary, I would have it considered, whether this circumstance, to administer the supper every Lord's-day, be a circumstance of that nature and rank, that if there be not a warrant from practice and institution by God for it, yet any church may at all appoint, or determine it for a standing rule, for edification's sake. The reason of my query herein is this: because this is a circumstance which, for the administration of other ordinances, God once made an institution of; and therefore for the church to determine or appoint their circumstances for this ordinance without an institution, were to make an image of those institutions of God. That God made an institution of this circumstance in other ordinances, is evident in the sacrifices every Sabbath day, and in reading and preaching the law (Acts xv.) every Sabbath day, and, under the gospel, in the laying up for the necessities of the saints the first day of the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. But now to make an image or the likeness of God's institution, is that which is forbidden in the second command; and the prohibition of it is indeed the full scope, and speaks the utmost extent of that command, and holds true in all institutions, from the greatest to the least. We may not make sacraments like to his, nor days like to his (which was Jeroboam's sin, 1 Kings xii. 32), nor a temple like his, which the Samaritans did, nor set our posts by his (Ezek. xliii. 8), nor make the like oil that he ordained for Aaron. And as it holds in greater, so in lesser, institutions of circumstances as well, for they differ but in degrees, and when God hath once stamped his institution on a thing, about his worship, man is not to stamp his, for it were false coinage, which is against God's prerogative, as it is unlawful to coin farthings as well as shillings; so electively to make circumstances in worship every way like to those which God doth, or hath made, as well as to make institutions like to his greater ordinances. Anything, an institution once set upon it, is for ever after, royal, and not to be imitated selectively in worship, by man, or by his institution. We are not, I say, to institute anything formally like to God's institution, nor for the same holy end, for which God instituted any circumstance; and therefore we must not appoint any ceremonies to teach, or signify, or to put us in mind of our duty, because God ordained the phylacteries, that they might remember the commandments to do them, Num. xv. 39, 40. So, therefore, if God once ordained this circumstance in other ordinances for edification's sake, for the church to appoint the same circum-

stance for this ordinance for edification's sake, is to make the same image formally which God once made.

Ans. This being a circumstance upon which an institution is passed for edification's sake in other ordinances, it is thereby made incapable of being subjected to the rules of the third command, which gives general rules to men to order mere outward circumstances. Now to subject it to such rules, were to debase it. It is of an higher rank, and thereby made free (as I may so speak) of the rules by which men determine; God only, by institution of his own, can now meddle with it. As a nobleman is of an higher rank, and so not subject to imprisonment for debts, &c., except by a warrant from the king himself.

Obj. But you will object, and say, To have a sacrament (being a good and holy ordinance of God in itself) administered every Lord's day is more for edification; for the oftener the more edifying.

Ans. 1. If the ground of this opinion be, that because the oftener an ordinance is administered the more may be the edification, I answer, There may be a deceit in that; for there may be an *often*, which may be too much. So in private prayer one may pray too often in respect of other occasions. But the goodness of this circumstance, *how often*, depends upon a due season, which either an institution designs, or special circumstances and occasions, which indeed, if they fall out to be every Lord's day, then I yield; but to do it setly, electively, and as a standing rule, that I question, so as the edification that must answer to this so often receiving must either be from an institution or special circumstance and occasion leading to it and calling for it, which, varying (as they use to do), cannot infallibly be fixed to every Lord's day as best. However,

2. That edification which would arise from such outward circumstances and occasions, to make most and best for the edification of the church, to have it every Lord's day, is but a circumstantial edification, and not such an edification as flows from and accompanies this circumstance when it is an institution. And so it is an edification that comes in upon this ground, that because the ordinance is good, therefore the oftener administered the more edification.

3. If this circumstance, to have this ordinance every Lord's day, had been an institution of God for more edification's sake, he best knowing how often any ordinance would be most edifying that way, would have appointed it himself if it would be more for edification in such a respect, for he takes as much care for the edification of his church in one ordinance as in another, else he should have been defective in his care in some things, or have took unnecessary care in others.

Obj. 2. But it may fall out in respect of mere outward circumstances and occasions, that some church should have the sacrament every Lord's day.

I answer, 1, That then it is not an image of God's institution; for if occasions call for an ordinance every Lord's day (as suppose a baptism to be administered), yet still because this is not made a set standing rule, whether there be occasion or no (which is the obligation of a set institution), therefore such a providence that an ordinance should come to be administered, is not an image of God's institution, which is only when in a standing way men so appoint it.

2. That rule, depending upon varying circumstances, can be made and kept but from Lord's day to Lord's day, but we cannot make a standing rule and canon of it. This assertion or consideration past would have this circumstance in the administration of an ordinance every Lord's day to be such as is not determinable by human prudence or appointment. But I come unto

two other assertions (which I more mainly intend) which do concern this ordinance and the question more nearly.

1. The first assertion is, that the nature and sort and kind of this ordinance of the Lord's supper is such as there must of necessity be an institution, either expressly or by necessary consequence, settled by God, and left for the time of its administration.

The second assertion is, that according to the way and prescriptions of the New Testament, that time can be no other than every Lord's day.

1. The first of these two I shall prove in general, that there is and must be an institution for the time of its administration, and then I shall prove that time to be every Lord's day.

I begin with the first, that for the time of the administration of this ordinance of the Lord's supper, namely, how often it should be, there must necessarily be an institution somewhere in Scripture left and to be found, or one at least that may be drawn from Scripture by good consequence (for it is an ordinance of that nature and sort as that, reason tells us, there must be an institution left and found in Scripture about some set time for its administering). This I would evince by such reason, as if there were as yet no scriptures that we knew of to be found for it and to fix our thoughts, yet they might set us all awork to find out one. Now, this assertion I prove by these three main propositions laid together :—

1. That there are and ever were two sorts, and but two sorts, of ordinances appointed by God in the church, and they are either continual or occasional. This proposition contains two things in it :

(1.) That there are ordinances both occasional and continual.

(2.) That there are and ever were but these two sorts.

(1.) I prove that there are two such kind of ordinances. I will here first explain the terms.

[1.] By occasional ordinances I mean such as, though they are in themselves to continue for ever in the church upon continual occasions, yet in respect of their use they depend upon a particular occasion in providence to call for the practice of them. Some ordinances were ordained for a single occasion extraordinary, as the extraordinary sacrament of manna in the wilderness, and the cloud, and the baptizing in the sea, &c., mentioned 1 Cor. x. 11 ; but such occasional ordinances I mean not, but only such as are for their use in the church, or their essence in the church, continual, yet still the particular precise time when they shall be administered is occasional. Thus in philosophy we distinguish of essence and existence, and say of several kinds or species of creatures, that their essence is always *in rerum natura*. So roses (and many other fruits and plants) being a sort or kind of creatures, that have a station and rank among the number of others that help to the making up of the world's perfection, we in that respect say, the essence of a rose always is, nature having ordained such a creature always to belong unto the world, to make up the perfection of it, but yet so as we say, that the existence or individual putting forth of such flowers is but in some one special season of the year, and not always. Thus in like manner some ordinances always belong unto a church, as parts of its perfections and privileges, and so the institution of them is for ever and for all times ; and yet their use and existence is merely occasional, even as providence shall put them forth and call them to stand up in their season. Such was circumcision of old, which, though it was an ordinance for ever, and so continual in the essence and being of it, yet the use thereof was to be but as children were born, which made the existence merely occasional. So offering personal sacrifices, or per-

forming a vow, were as occasion fell out, as upon occasion of uncleanness, &c. And so baptism is now, the use of which depends upon new occasions; so likewise are excommunication and admonition, which are church censures; and so likewise admission of members; all which are to be used but as fit matter in providence comes to be presented.

[2.] When I say occasional, the meaning is not that they are ordained for occasions negative or permissive (as I may so call them), that is, when the occasions of the church will permit, and so a fit spare time falls out for an ordinance; but when in this distinction and opposition to continual ordinances we use the word occasional, the meaning is intended of such as have a positive, peculiar, and special occasion directly and properly calling for them; which occasion is affirmative: as when a child is born in the church, this is an affirmative occasion for baptism, and the like.

Now, having explained what occasional ordinances are, I come to explain that other sort of ordinances, which are continual. Such were the public sacrifices of the temple, which were called a continual sacrifice (Jer. xxxiii. 18 and Ezek. xlvi. 14), because offered morning and evening in a set and standing course, not at all waiting upon occasions. And it is not only said there to be a perpetual ordinance, that is, which was to last and endure in the church (and such even occasional ordinances may be styled), but it is besides called a continual ordinance, because appointed to be every morning by a set ordinance of course; so vers. 14 and 15, it is said to be 'every morning for a continual burnt-offering.' So prayer now is a continual ordinance; 'pray continually,' which is not meant of continual occasions, but that a continual course of prayer, or a set course every day (I do not say at set hours) is of God's institution, as Paul says, 2 Tim. i. 3, that he 'served God from his forefathers,' that is, according to the manner of the godly of old, who, answerably to the continual sacrifice in the temple, offered up, wherever they were, either in private or in their families, the sacrifice of prayer twice a day, and were bound to do so, else the practice had not been general nor binding unto Paul. But, says he to Timothy, 'I have thee in remembrance in my prayers day and night,' that is, twice a day, every morning and evening. Thus also the very entering into the holy of holies once a year, because it was of course and setly, is said to be done continually, Heb. x. 1. And so the passover, though but once a year, yet because of set course it may be called continual. Thus all church ordinances which are of set course in the church, and depend not upon occasions, may be called continual ordinances, though not every week day to be administered. Such public prayer is by all confessed to be, and such I take the word preached to be also. And so this distinction of ordinances, occasional and continual, if it be not *in terminis*, in the same terms set forth in the Scripture, as to both the parts of it, yet for the one part it is; for the term *continual* is expressed in the places before cited, and that in opposition to *occasional;* for there being two sorts of sacrifices, some ordained by institution to be at set times, others as occasion of sin and uncleanness fell out, those which were set were called continual, in a way of distinction from that other (as also those four ordinances here, in this Acts ii. 42), and so must have another branch to answer to them, which is this of occasional. However, if the Scripture useth not the very terms, yet the distinction ariseth from the thing itself, namely, from the different use and end of ordinances, which are necessarily such; only I add this caution, that solemn set ordinances, though by divine appointment confined to a time, may yet occasionally be commanded at other times besides; and then upon all such occasions they become occasional for that time. Thus, though the sacrifices public were a set ordinance, yet sacrifice was an

occasional ordinance also; for when a man had personally sinned, he was to bring an offering to the priest, &c. And so is the word preached, and prayer now, which though set of course on the Lord's day, yet as occasion is, they may be used on the week days also. And this is hinted to prevent a mistake, lest upon this doctrine any should think the obligation to administer this ordinance on the Lord's day to be exclusive, as if upon no other day besides the church may have this sacrament or the word. For this celebration of the sacrament on the Lord's day is so to be understood, as that it may likewise be administered upon any day besides, though that day be the more proper season of it, and no day to be chosen rather than it. The gospel's privilege is in this more large than that of the law; some ordinances then they could not have, but upon certain set times; and times were so appointed, as all times besides were excluded. The passover could not be at other times eaten (but only in case of uncleanness or a journey), but at that set time appointed, the fourteenth day of the first month. So likewise circumcision was by institution confined to the eighth day; and they might not do it before, nor defer it till after, that precise time. And so many other solemn ordinances are appropriated to their solemn feasts. But it is not so now under the gospel, when, though God hath appointed a special time for public worship, yet any worship may be performed at any time; and as in every place we may lift up pure hands, and celebrate church assemblies, so at any time. As the word is to be preached 'in season and out of season,' so the sacrament may be administered in season and out of season. The primitive churches are therefore supposed, in that first church of the Jews (whose very calling, for a while at first, was only to hold forth all ordinances of the gospel), to have met (as for the place) *κατ' οἶκον, at home*, that is, in private houses, for it is spoken in distinction from their meetings in the temple. So for the time of their meetings, *καθ' ἡμέραν every day*, Acts ii. 46; and so to have celebrated this sacrament every day, even as, Acts v. 41, they are said to preach every day in the temple.

This being premised and proved, I now come to prove the other part of the proposition in hand, that there are but these two kinds of ordinances in the church, occasional and continual. This I might prove by an enumeration of all ordinances in the Old Testament, which may all be reduced to these two heads. For as for vows and free-will offerings (which seem most free in man's liberty), they were occasional; and such as, when a just occasion fell out, that called for them, they were not to be omitted, nor yet were they made and offered but when a just occasion invited them. And, indeed, it were a wonder if there should be a middle kind of *vagous* ordinances, which were indefinitely instituted, and at random; not fixed in the main ground of their institution, upon proper occasions, or to set times by institution designed under the New Testament. Let any man instance in any other such, and it were strange this ordinance should be such alone. Indeed, reason tells us, that there is not and cannot be any such middle ordinance; for if there be, the main ground of its institution must be, to serve a vacancy from all other occasions of human business and ordinances, and to be used whenever such a vacancy should happen; that is (as I explained in my distinction), that they would be instituted for negative occasions, as not being affixed to any set time of course, as continual ordinances are, nor to serve a special occasion, that calls for it one day more than another; but for such a time it must be, when there is an opportune vacancy or empty space of time that may fall out free from all other occasions, and all other ordinances, both which in this supposition are to be served first. Now, I instance in this, as a supposed middle between the two other; for I cannot see how the wit of

man can invent any other. I grant, indeed, that such vacancies of time may fall out, and also, that those ordinances which God hath already, by a primary intent, instituted for set times, and by rule affixed to them, he hath, as an overplus, and an additional edification of his church, commanded to be used at all such times of vacancy from human occasions and refreshments. For example, he hath appointed the preaching of the word a set ordinance for every Lord's day (as was said), and so it is a continual ordinance of course; he hath also appointed this word to be dispensed and preached upon all special affirmative occasions that should require it, as a word in season to the weary, &c. And these being the main foundations and grounds of its institution, he hath enlarged the use of it unto all such negative occasions, when all other occasions will permit, and there happens a vacant time to hear sermons preached, and when no special occasion or time instituted doth require it. But this was but a secondary enlarged ground of this ordinance, for which alone it should never have been instituted, nor any else. This (as I take it) may be the most probable meaning of that text, 'preach the word in season;' either instituted by God, as the Lord's day, or occasional, as special need requires; and not only so, but 'out of season,' in a mere vacancy.

Now, to prove that there is no such ordinance instituted merely for negative occasions, or vacancy from other hindrances, I urge these inconveniences and reasons against it.

1. Such an ordinance would depend for its being and existence upon too many uncertainties. But now, as a father would not venture any child to an utter uncertain breeding, so neither can I believe that God hath done so by any of his ordinances. Now see the several uncertainties in this case.

(1.) There is not an absolute necessity that such an ordinance should ever be administered at all; for it might be supposed never to come to have any turn or vacancy spare from all other occasions for it to be administered in, for it is not of absolute certainty that there should be such a vacancy, or at least not often; as this ordinance of the sacrament (if this should be said to be such) is commanded to be administered.

(2.) Besides this, if such times should fall out, yet the celebration of the ordinance would depend too much upon man's arbitrament, and that for its only existence and being; which must be at such times, not only when a whole church shall have no impediments by reason of other occasions, but when they shall judge so, and call upon one another for it; and how apt our nature is to find out impediments, or at least in such cases to forget the ordinances, God well knew. And this our obnoxiousness to forget our duty makes it yet more uncertain; for how apt is such an ordinance to be forgotten, which hath no positive occasion to call for it, nor any fixed instituted time to say to us, now it ought to be administered.

It is one reason, and it is a good one, which our divines give, why it was necessary that the Lord's day should be fixed by God to a certain day, even to the seventh, and with a *memento* in the command; because, if it had been left to men to judge when their vacancy would have permitted it, the public worship of God would soon have fallen to the ground. And by the like reason any particular ordinance would have been easily forgotten and discontinued, as many have been that yet were fixed, as the feast of tabernacles was, Nehem. viii. 17, from Joshua's time till Nehemiah's. You may make an observation, how great the neglective forgetfulness of man would be of any such ordinance, by the difference which was put in the administration of this ordinance, and the observation of the Lord's day (which are the ordinances we have last instanced in) by the papists, who alone bore the face of

the church many hundred years. As for the Lord's day, because they thought the institution thereof every week to be apostolical (being sounder in the point than many of our divines), therefore they have transmitted the observation of it every week, down unto our times. But as for the time of celebrating the Lord's supper, because they thought it to be left indefinite, they therefore kept not to it, but thought once a year enough for the receiv- of it by the people; so rarely would men use an ordinance which they thought was left to their liberty.

Yea, (3.) this ordinance of the Lord's supper would be made yet more uncertain, seeing there is an allowance to fill up such vacancies with other ordinances that are settled to fixed times by institution; as to have the word preached, or prayer, when there is a vacancy; and so that vacancy might be as well filled up with them as with this, and so it might still wait for a place, as that man did at the pool, and another ordinance might step in before it. And if we might suppose any other ordinances to be left unto man's sole liberty, yet this least of all; for it being instituted to remember us of Christ's death, surely itself hath either some special occasion, or fixed institution, to put us in mind of it.

2. As such an ordinance would be left to too great uncertainties for its existence, so it would be cast too far below all other ordinances; for not having a brother's settled portion allotted it to live upon, it must wait upon all other ordinances till they were all served, and live upon their leavings of time, which is not beseeming nor compatible with the honour of an ordinance. This must necessarily follow, for ordinances fixed in a set way to the Lord's day, must be served every Lord's day; for they are of the foundation, and challenge it originally. And occasional ordinances that fall out, which have a proper special occasion to call for them, must be also first performed. And certainly God hath not debased any ordinances so low as thus to attend all others, especially not so great an ordinance as this of the Lord's supper is.

3. It stands with reason that every ordinance might have its proper root for it to grow up upon, and so come to have its existence; it was meet that it should have a station, and season positive, as the main fundamental ground of its institution, that so it might exist of itself, and be able to challenge itself a place that cannot be denied it. And thus continued ordinances have such a season by God's primary institution of them; which, having an existence given them at fixed times, God, in a secondary intention, enlarged the use of them to negative occasions (as I term them), as he hath that of public prayer and the preaching of the word, which are continual ordinances (in their proper root) for every Lord's day; which yet God hath further commanded to be engrafted upon occasions, but still so as this is the root they naturally first grow upon; and the Lord's day, and every Lord's day, is their seat and their station by institution, and that set time their inheritance which they may make claim to. Thus occasional ordinances likewise have a proper root peculiar to them; like flowers, that though they put not forth continually, yet have their season which necessarily gives them existence; and when their season is, they may challenge it (but whether their season be necessarily or electively only the Lord's day, that I shall afterwards discuss), surely God hath took as good order, and made no worse provision, for the existence of his creatures of the new world (his ordinances) than for the creatures of the old. Now every species or kind of creature in the old world hath a root; a season, either continual and fixed, or special and proper. God made no vagabond creatures, then only to have a place and to exist when and where there should be a vacuum, a void emptiness of

other creatures. And surely God hath acted by the like measure in the new world, wherein the ordinances are the creatures; and either some proper time and positive occasion, or else some fixed time, all the year long, is their root of being.

II. The second main proposition is this, that for all ordinances, which are not occasional, but standing and continual, there must necessarily be a set time by institution appointed for them.

This proposition is a necessary corollary of the former, and follows upon those particulars which I have brought to confirm the former.

Reason 1. For every ordinance that hath an essence, constitution, or being in the church, must also have some existence, and therefore a time. All creatures of the old world have two things allotted them.

1. A constituted essence, by which they are, and differ from other creatures; as the essence of a man is that he is reasonable, and a beast, that it hath a sensitive being.

2. An existence, by which some individuals of each kind do exist, and stand forth in the world, at such or such times and seasons. And there is no essence nor kind of being but is appointed to have an existence, at some time or other, in the world; for else that being might be ordained in vain, and have no being, and so it had as good continue nothing still. Therefore Solomon says, Eccles. iii. 1, that 'There is a time to everything, and a time to every purpose under the sun.' As to every purpose of man's heart, which is a thing most contingent, so to every kind of thing or being, natural and artificial, to all sorts of things under the sun (for he instanceth in things natural, artificial, and voluntary), and he says there is a set time; so the word signifies, *tempus determinatum*. Time is a necessary circumstance of being, and therefore was created when other things were, and is ordained to be, when things are ordained; for as nothing was in God's purpose that should have a being, but hath a time for it also, which also, as Solomon says there, gives it a beauty and a comeliness. Now, as it was with creatures of the old world, so is it with those of the new world, and amongst those, with ordinances, which are parts of it. If God hath given to any of them an essence and being to be ordinances, you must suppose them to have a time appointed them to come forth into existence. As no creature could come to have an essence, a rank among creatures, but it must have a time to exist, so nor ordinances could ever come to have had an instituted being given them, but in relation to an existence, and a proper time for them to flourish in. Now, such ordinances which are not occasional, and so have no special occasions allotted in providence to call for their existence, that they may stand forth, and call for a place, and be beautiful in that their season, they must necessarily have an instituted time, a set time, appointed them. And if providence and occasion do not set out this time, then necessarily institution must.

2. The very purport or meaning of this name of distinction given it, when it is called a continual ordinance (as in Scripture that phrase is used), doth necessarily intimate this much, that that distinction is given it from its having a set time fixed by institution for its existence. The word *continual*, as it doth respect time in all men's apprehensions, so in the Scripture acception it respects a set, fixed, appointed time, that in the course of time comes about again and again continually, whether it be every day, or every month, or every year. That was called continual (as was said before), not only which is done at all times, or every day, but of set course; so, 2 Sam. ix. 7, Mephibosheth is said to sit at David's table continually, that is, not as a stranger, coming in upon occasion, but at the set times of meals. And so

'praying continually,' in the New Testament, is taken not simply for praying always, or upon all occasions, or continuing in prayer with fervency only, but to pray setly, morning and evening (as I shewed out of 2 Tim. i. 3), even as it is called the continual sacrifice, because it came about every day by institution; and if any were seldomer, yet, if ordinances, they had a set time for them. Thus the high priest's going into the holy of holies, because it came about every year once, at a set instituted time, is said to be continually: Heb. x. 1, 'Those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually.' As, therefore, we say that time is concreated with all things, so I may say of such ordinances, that their time is instituted together with their institution, and by the same authority.

And, 3dly, if any continual ordinance had not a time fixed for it, obliging the conscience by institution, that might call upon men now to practise it, and challenge an interest in some time allotted it, it were cast below an occasional ordinance, and made of an inferior nature to it, in its institution; for it would not have so much as a proper occasion to call for it, as those occasional ordinances have.

4thly. This proposition is backed with this, that in the Old Testament all ordinances, not occasional, had a fixed time by institution. It is true, that some occasional ones also had a fixed time when once an occasion required them, as circumcision the eighth day; but it was because of some typicalness annexed to it. But now, under the gospel, all occasional ordinances are left to their proper seasons, as providence calls for them, and so not affixed; as it became the gospel, wherein such types cease. But yet continual ordinances are to be affixed to a set time by institution, else Christ were not so complete in his institutions as Moses, but should leave things to man's will, which, being as corrupt and negligent now as before, needed the fixing of such ordinances to a set time as much as then.

III. The third proposition which I lay down is this, That this ordinance of the Lord's supper is a continual standing ordinance; it is of that rank, and can be of no other.

And the reason thereof (which to me is undeniable) is this, because that it is not an occasional ordinance; that is, it is not an ordinance that hath, or can have, any positive, special, peculiar occasion to call for it, and require it one day or time more than another; and therefore it must be a continual ordinance, and so by consequence a set and fixed ordinance to a time by institution, as the second proposition declared. Now the reason is founded upon this, that there is no rank of middle ordinances, but every ordinance must (as I shewed) be either the one or the other; and therefore to prove that it is not occasional, taking occasional in that sense before explained, is enough to prove that it is continual.

1. It is not occasional in its first fundamental institution. Indeed, some of the popish divines would put it into occasional seasons; for they allowing a private communion at home, when men are sick, and also allowing in public, that the church should receive not always necessarily together, but that every day when mass is said, any one or two (though no more who have a mind to communicate be present) may receive if they please; for (say they) some persons may have more special need of the sacrament of the Lord's supper than others (in respect of tentations), to be comforted by it, and some have a more special mind to that ordinance, and are more peculiarly affected unto it than unto any other, and so may occasionally be called to it; they do hereby evidently shew, that they reckon this ordinance to be occasional. But we know no such divinity, for we say,

(1.) This ordinance, of all others, is an act of the whole church. It is the only proper badge of the church's communion; and in this respect church members are called 'one bread,' as well as 'one body,' 1 Cor. x. 17, and therefore they are to take it together, when their meeting hath the full number of all that can come; and this rather than any other ordinance is in this manner to be celebrated. And therefore, 1 Cor. xi. 33, in this case, and for this ordinance, if any come late, others are to stay for them,—'Tarry one for another,'—which in other ordinances they are not so strictly tied unto. And if thus it be the ordinance of the whole church, then variety of such occasions, as personal tentations, &c., cannot come to be any such peculiar, special occasion to the administering of it to one man more than another, for it is alike the act of the whole.

(2.) Indeed, and in truth, there can never be invented or supposed, any such proper, special occasion, requiring this ordinance to be administered upon this Lord's day or that, rather than upon any other, which might more especially call upon the church for the practice of it. As for other ordinances, there are such proper occasions, thus prayer for the sick, baptizings, and excommunication; and even the prophesying of private members is but an occasional ordinance, as God stirs up their hearts, and reveals something to them, as the apostle speaks. There is nothing in the ordinance itself to vary it, or make it more seasonable at one time than at another; but it is fitted to all believers alike, whether grown Christians or young. It is milk and strong meat too, for it is the common Christ of all; neither was it instituted in any such more special manner for tentations, or victory over lusts; not peculiarly or specially, so as that you can say, it is good for one thing more than another, or that it hath a special virtue for something, which one Christian needs more than another; but it is an ordained Καθόλικον, composed of qualities to work upon all tempers, and in all seasons, upon all constitutions of souls. If faith be never so weak, it strengthens it; if strong, a man is as much necessitated to take it, to grow in strength. Even as church fellowship, the cause of ordinances, is alike necessary for all, in all seasons, so is this; yea, it is so uniform in its nature and working, that all churches in the world, taken together, have as much need of it as one church, and one church as all, and no more.

(3.) Neither can there be any variation in respect of any circumstance a church can be in at one time, which it is not in at another. There may fall out impediments, as if the not having an officer to administer it (but so there may be also of such ordinances as are affixed to the Lord's day); but there can be no proper occasions or circumstances that may vary it, so as to have it administered one day, and not another. No man or church can say, We cannot prepare to receive every Lord's day, nor that any occasions on the week days do unfit us; for they are bound to be in such a frame as always to be prepared; and if they be not prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, yet they ought not to omit it, as the Israelites did not the passover; yea, let me add this, it is less subject to variation by occasions, than the word, or public prayers of the church, or laying up for the necessities of others, are, for which you have institutions for every Lord's day. For the matter of the word, the subject of our sermons do vary with occasions, and our sermons are longer or shorter, and they are composed for comfort one day, and for reproof another day; for as your needs are, so they vary; yea, sometimes as a particular member's need is, they vary. A word in season is to be spoken to the weary; but here in the Lord's supper there is no such variation. The word, like the moon, though it be a standing ordinance in heaven, yet appears in several shapes, and so the word too. But this, as the sun,

is uniform, for the person of Christ (the 'Sun of righteousness') crucified is wholly and entirely the matter of it; and as he is the 'same to-morrow, and to-day, and yesterday,' so is this ordinance. So the duty of alms varies; as God hath blessed a man, so let him lay up as the church, or other churches, have need. But it is not so with this ordinance, and therefore this is capable of a more uniform rule, and fixed obligation and institution, than any other.

I might in the last place shew, that it is a continual ordinance, from this, Acts ii. 42, where all ordinances continual are reckoned up, which are four in number; and this, in the first church, as the measure of solemn set worship for ever. But I leave that now, intending to argue it out in reasons.

Obj. But there is this objection, grounded on that speech of the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'As oft as you eat, you shew forth,' &c. The apostle seems there to speak of it but as an indefinite ordinance, and not as a continual, in that he says, *toties quoties*, so oft as.

Ans. 1. His scope there is not at all to speak of the time of this supper, but only to inform them of the high end, and nature, and intention of this ordinance, that when they took it they might know what they did (as we use to say), and what they were about. You know they slighted it, and took it in vain, and discerned not the Lord's body. He therefore minds them of the institution, that they might know what they did. Know what you do (says he), for as oft as you receive this, you shew forth the Lord's death. It is a manner of speech, used to shew what is the scope of an action that is customary, when we would insinuate the great danger of some action frequent, yet out of ignorance slighted. Thus, if we hear one ignorantly and ordinarily swear, as not knowing what it is to take an oath, we use to say, Do you know what you do in so doing? As often as you swear, you give your soul to the devil; so here (says the apostle), as oft as you receive unworthily, you eat your own damnation; and because they were to receive frequently by Christ's institution, therefore he minds them the more of it, that they might know what it was to receive. As often as you receive (says he), you shew forth Christ's death; and therefore tells them, that if they receive unworthily, they eat damnation to themselves.

2. This phrase of speech was to shew the unvarying, constant, uniform end and intent of this sacrament, which is constantly at all times to shew forth Christ's death; so oft as you do it, it is still for this principal end. The word sometimes shews one thing, sometimes another, but this constantly preacheth Christ's death: as oft as you receive, you shew forth Christ's death.

The third general assertion is as the conclusion of the two former, and inferred from them both; and it is this, that

This being a continual ordinance (as hath been shewed in the first proposition), and continual ordinances necessarily requiring a time instituted, or fixed somewhere (as was shewn in the second), the fixed time therefore for every ordinance neither is, nor can be, other than the Lord's day, according to the ordinary course and tenor of the New Testament, which imports that every Lord's day is the instituted time for them.

I shall demonstrate this by reason first, and then examine Scriptures afterwards. It is proved by reason thus, or by these steps.

1. Under the gospel you have no other instituted time set and fixed, for any ordinance, but the Lord's day. I do not say you are to have no other times for ordinances, but you have no other times fixed by institution. Occasional times there may and ought to be upon other days, by virtue of the command that bids us serve the season, &c., Rom. xii., and take the fittest

occasion for every work and ordinance occasional; but you have no other instituted time appointed fixedly by God besides the Lord's day, which indeed is one of the differences between the times of the law and of the gospel. Under the law, God made special Sabbaths by institution fixed to set days, for special ordinances to be administered upon, viz., for the passover, and for the first fruits; but now, there is no instituted time except this. Now, then, if this ordinance, being not occasional (as was said), must therefore have an instituted time appointed it by God, set and fixed, this time can be no other than the Lord's day, for there is no other time appointed by institution, under the gospel, except the Lord's day.

But it may be said, that this gains but only thus much, that the Lord's day is the time instituted for it; and so also it may be said of occasional ordinances, that the Lord's day is an instituted time for them too, inasmuch as it is such for all ordinances in common.

Therefore, 2, I go a step further, and say, that continual ordinances, and among them the Lord's supper, are not only to have a time that is instituted for them to be administered upon, but further, there must be an institution to appoint a time for them, even a fixed, determined time, set apart for them by virtue of an institution, which may determine the conscience to them, and by virtue of a command call for them. And so it is not enough to say, that the Lord's day is the time instituted indeterminately, indefinitely, and at random for this sacrament of the Lord's supper, as for all other ordinances it is. But when it is said that the Lord's day is instituted for it, the sense must necessarily be, that it is the time fixed and determinately set by institution for this ordinance; and so it differs from the relation that this instituted time hath unto ordinances occasional. It may be said that the Lord's day is the only time that we find instituted, wherein they or any ordinance may be administered; but for other occasional times in the week days, though there be a general rule that will oblige the conscience to them as occasions are, yet they cannot be called instituted times. And therefore, in that sense it may be truly said, that when occasional ordinances are to be administered, the Lord's day is the only instituted time of the New Testament for them. But something more must be said of continual ordinances, namely, that there is a time instituted that calls for them, and obligeth the conscience by an institution to them; and so these two sorts of ordinances differ in their interest in this day. That occasional ordinances have, by virtue of the institution of this day, but a remote, indefinite, undetermined interest therein; and for their determinate existence on this or that Lord's day, there must come over and above some special occasion that calls for it, on this or that week, more than on another, only the Lord's day presents itself still, as a time blessed and instituted for such ordinances, in common and at random. But if this ordinance of the Lord's supper be a continual ordinance, as it is, and this the only time we find instituted, then this ordinance must have, by an institution, some fixed determinate interest in it, and that by a defining by appointment what Lord's days it must be administered upon. And the reason for this is out of the former grounds evident; of which now I urge only this, that otherwise this ordinance should have no determinate existence allotted it, but were, in that respect, cast below all occasional ordinances. For if its interest in the Lord's day be thus unlimited, and but in a common relation; that it is only a time instituted for it, no otherwise than it is for all ordinances in general, and as a common hall is for all comers; and withal, that it hath no special set occasion to call for it, and require its existence; then it is still left in far worse case and hazard for existing than occasional ordinances are; for they, as providence

gives occasions, do call for time, and oblige the conscience unto a set time for them. But this would be left like an *individuum vagum*, that has nothing to shew for it, why it should challenge a place or room in this instituted time, more than vagrant persons have in common town houses. Yea, seeing other ordinances can still challenge some peculiar, determinate interest, either by occasion or institution, this might ever be extruded, having nothing but an indefinite, common, vagrant interest to shew for itself. Therefore, certainly if the Lord's day be the only time instituted under the New Testament, then must be found an institution to determine and fix on what Lord's day this is to be administered; and this, not to be left to the wide world for its subsisting and existence, but such as by law or inheritance it may call for as its portion.

Now, 3, therefore add to this then, that if there must be found an institution for it on set Lord's days, they being the only time instituted, then either the institution sets apart every Lord's day, or some special Lord's days (which the word sets out and appoints for it, rather than others), I would see a warrant for, however, some churches presume to single out some special days, because their congregations be too vast (and so not according to rule, which is, that churches should consist of no more than can meet together in one place) to administer it to all every Lord's day; and others, by preferring one Lord's day before another, as Easter day, Whitsunday, &c., do appoint it to be only or specially then administered; yet there is no word for it, nor reason by consequence from the word.

Now, if there be no warrant of institution for special Lord's days, then necessarily the institution must fall upon every Lord's day.

Yea, 4, let it be but granted in general, that there is no other rule to determine this institution but this common maxim, that all ordinances, both continual and occasional, are ordained for the Lord's day; and that the Lord's day is the only instituted time for all ordinances in this common general way: let that be all that the word says for it, so as no special charter or interest be produced by institution, yet this very common charter will carry it, and this general, indefinite institution will serve its turn; for when each ordinance shall come to claim its right and particular allotment and portion in these Lord's days, it must necessarily be set forth according to the nature and kind of each ordinance. And then, look how occasional ordinances will justly put in, and call for an occasional allotment for their administration, as occasion is offered and requires, so continual ordinances will challenge a continual set allowance every Lord's day. For they must have maintenance and subsistence, according to their rank and quality, and end of being ordained. The common law and dictate of reason would and must thus set out their portions. Continual ordinances must be continually on the Lord's day, and what is that but to be every Lord's day? We say, in the decision of another point of controversy and difficulty between the Arminians and us, about the existence of things contingent, and the voluntary acts of man's will, that in respect of God's decree, all things do exist necessarily, and by his determinate counsel; yet in respect of second causes, and their coming forth into actual existing or being, we say, that they all exist according to their kind; which is, that free agents, as, namely, man's will, should, in respect of its own motion, work freely; and contingent or casual things, that fall out by chance, should, in respect of second causes, fall out contingently, according to their kind; but necessary and natural actions, as, namely, the motion of the sun, should fall out necessarily and constantly, according to its kind, and yet all act in their several kinds, by the determinate counsel of God, that rules all their causes according to their

kinds. Thus we illustrate also the several existences of ordinances for their time and season, by saying that they are varied according to their several natures and kinds. God hath took order in his word for the existence of them all, but for occasional ordinances he hath not given set rules of institution for the time of their existence, to bring them forth in; for that had not been according to their kind, but indeed clean contrary to it; for they, being in their institution intended for occasions, accordingly must exist but as occasions are; yet by a necessary command, when occasion is offered, therefore as necessarily, when such occasions fall out, as continual ordinances to be administered. But ordinances of continual and not occasional use he hath ordained to exist, according to their kind, continually, and not occasionally; and therefore a rule of institution must determine their existence. And he having declared that the Lord's day is the only time that is instituted by him for all ordinances, suppose he had given no other rule, yet occasional ordinances are to exist occasionally on that day, that is, as occasion calls for any of them; but continual ordinances are to exist, and be administered continually on that day; and what is that, but that every Lord's day they should be administered?

I will now, in the last place, as the *coronis* and conclusion of all, and for the confirmation of both these assertions, add only this, which shall concern both, that it stands with the greatest reason, both that there should be an instituted time for continual standing ordinances, and also that there should be continual ordinances purposely appointed for that instituted time, and as much reason for the one as for the other. So as there is a proper, peculiar, mutual relation between such ordinances and such an instituted time; they are mutually ordained for each other, these ordinances for that time, and that time for these ordinances. It stands with the greatest reason that may be.

1. That God should institute continual standing ordinances for his church to meet together to celebrate, and so to constitute his public visible worship, besides such ordinances as should be for occasions, that yet uncertainly would fall out. For it became him who is the great God, the ever-living, standing God of the world, who upholds all continually by a constant hand of power and wisdom, to have a standing set worship whereby he should be set up and acknowledged in the world, and not be like the gods of the heathen, nor the saints of the papists, who were gods for occasions, and are saints for special occasions; and as they had sacrifices, so these have prayers upon particular occasions. But the standing God must have standing ordinances. It was not fit for God, the great King, to stay and wait upon occasions for all the public worship he was to have, which might have fallen out, or perhaps not have fallen out. No; it had been too, too little for him.

And, 2, that he should institute and appoint a set and solemn time for such continual ordinances out of his own will, did become him also, and was as necessary as the former; for otherwise (besides other reasons proper to that argument) he had waited upon a greater uncertainty for the celebration of such ordinances than that which doth attend upon ordinances occasional, even on men's wills, and their occasions and pretences, to put off such worship; for occasions still as they had risen would have called for such ordinances as were occasional.

But if God himself does not set a time and fix it, there would be nothing to determine and call for ordinances, so as to oblige the conscience. And so such ordinances, instead of being the standing continual ordinances of his worship, should have become the most uncertain, and (through man's corruption) the seldomest administered of all other. And indeed fixedly to appoint

how oft they should be administered, and when, is that which makes them to be continual ordinances, and the worship of God to be solemn and standing in the world. And the determination of the circumstances of time, how oft, and on what day, was a matter of more moment, and more intrinsecally conjunct with the worship of God than the designation of a particular place; for though a place be as necessary as a time, yet from a set time appointed doth arise a solemnity of worship, and it is as royal a property and attribute of God's worship as any other, and serves to set it out and greaten it. And the iteration of a time in a set course thus or thus adds to the worship a greatness, both in multiplication of it that it is so oft, and also a solemnity and a restraint upon men, and so bears an impress of God's authority; but thus it is not in the designation of a set place. Therefore often in Scripture, when there is an institution of a set day for an ordinance, or mention of such a day, it is called a solemn assembly, as the prophet calls the new moon's feasts and sabbaths that were set, the solemnities of the house of Israel, Ezek. xlv. 17, and xlvi. 11. And Levit. xxiii. 36, the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles is translated a solemn assembly, which accordingly is by Christ called the great day of the feast, John vii. 37. Solemn they were by being set, and thereby greatened. And every such day had its set ordinances by institution appointed to fill up the worship of the day, and (as the phrase is, ver 37 of Levit. xxiii.) God, speaking unto Moses concerning the ordinances to be upon such feasts, says, that they must perform everything upon his day. For every such set time had its set offerings and ordinances, and the days were appointed for them, and they for the days. And therefore a standing day must have standing ordinances, that have a proper reference to the day, and the day to them, they being made for the day, and the day for them. And this difference for God's instituting a set time for worship under the gospel rather than a set place, they who are against the institution of the Sabbath have not considered, when they argue that there is like reason of place and time, between which, in this relation to worship, there is a broad and manifest difference.

Now then, if under the gospel it was meet there should be continual ordinances for a standing worship, that God might still be sure of being worshipped (whatever occasions were), and that there should be a set instituted time in these ordinances, then marry these two together, as being made one for another; these holy things for this holy day, standing continual ordinances for this set and standing day, according to the proportion of that rule out of Leviticus, 'everything upon his day,' *opus diei in suo die*, the day and ordinance thereof being mutually made for each other. And thus a solemn and standing worship shall be kept up in the world, under the gospel as well as under the law, which also was prophesied of, Ezek. xlvi. 13–15, that there should be a continual worship now, as there had been a continual sacrifice then. For there Ezekiel prophesies of the worship of the gospel, and that under the type and notion of the continual sacrifices and Sabbaths.

Use 1. See the gracious provision that God hath made in the world for his worship, and also for to feed his church.

He being a great King, for his own glory reserves a standing revenue of glory to come in by worship of men to himself, as it became him, besides that which comes in by occasions. You know princes have crown lands which bring in a standing rent, that cannot be sold or alienated (in a legal way), and they have customs and tributes which come in other ways, but the other are their royalty. So God hath standing ordinances as crown lands to give him a set revenue of old rents, which must never be left unimproved, as well as he has occasional customs from other ordinances.

Use. 2. See here the gracious provision made for the church, the family and household of God. Here is a constant provision of no less than four ordinances, the word, prayer, communication, and the Lord's supper. We are not like to starve then. God hath kept to his own rule, to provide for his family. As good housekeepers have some constant provision of store, as corn, beef, and the like, besides all occasional dainties that, like fowl and fish, come in to their tables, so God hath laid up all spiritual provisions for us; and to be sure you have Christ himself for one standing dish continually served up to you, as some rarity useth to be served up again and again, and goes round at last; a dish that fills all, and serves all tastes (as they say manna did), which is milk to babes, and to grown men strong meat; 'all in all, and unto all.' Many things in a sermon thou understandest not, and haply not many sermons; or if thou doest, yet findest not thy portion in them; but here to be sure thou mayest. Of sermons, some are for comfort, some to inform, and some to excite; but here in the sacrament is all thou canst expect. Christ is here light, and wisdom, and comfort, and all to thee. He is here an eye to the blind, a foot to the lame; yea, everything to every one.

Use 3. Hath God himself instituted both a time, and also standing ordinances for that time, to keep up a constant worship? What arrogancy is it then in such church governors (whether popish or reformed) as assume this power to themselves, saying that Christ hath instituted no set day for his worship, but has left it unto them, it becoming the liberty of the gospel not to be subject to days and times, as under the old law; and that God hath not defined out what set times should be for the Lord's supper, and so it falls under their jurisdiction to appoint it; and they do all this to enlarge their power. I will never believe that God would trust officers with settling such circumstances of worship, as he trusted not his own high priest with under the law, but settled them himself. No; God would never have left matters of so great importance at uncertainties; he would never have left even the revenues of his crown lands to those landlords, of whom many would have the vineyard to be theirs. And the fruit of their assuming this power you may see in the Lord's supper, which is absolutely by them commanded to be received at some certain times of the year, no oftener necessary to be received, which is their poor allowance for that ordinance. And if God had left the time of all worship to their appointment, and not more clearly fixed it, it would have come to the same pass in process of time, and a Sabbath once a month would have been well, which haply might have been but once a year. And yet all this was for the church's liberty, to free them from God's yoke, and to bring the consciences of men into a worse bondage of their own; as if God had made Christians free now from the like institution of a Sabbath to that of the Jews of old, and which himself then enjoined, to leave room to men and their power to determine the very same. Thus they exclude God, that themselves may rule. But blessed be thy name, O God, that though other lords besides thee have ruled over us, and would appoint us when to have Sabbaths or sacraments, yet thou hast wrought all our works for us; thyself hast appointed our works and times of serving thee. Thy service is perfect freedom, but theirs is bondage, which thou in mercy hast freed us from.

That you may clearly see the goodness of God in it, I will add this, that I find the papists themselves, and the best of their school, acknowledge, that the Lord's supper, being a sacrament given often to be administered, there must necessarily be a defining by some divine authority how many times at least we are to receive it, else, says Vasquez, the affirmative precept binding no man so to any precise time to receive this sacrament, but that he might omit it,

a man might forbear to receive it all his lifetime (as well as any time) without sin. The like saith Suarez. Therefore they say that Christ indeed left it indefinite, because he left power in the church to fix a set time how often, which the pope, by divine authority (say they), hath done, which, if he had not, this precept, if indefinitely given, would not have necessarily obliged a man all his lifetime. And therefore they say it is a sin not to receive once a year, because the pope (in whom is divine authority) hath so fixed it, but not oftener to receive is no sin. But now we, if we were left thus indefinitely (whose consciences cannot acknowledge any such power in the church), were left in a miserable uncertainty how oft at least we must receive or we sin. We have no help in this case but the word itself to decide it. And this is necessary; for, as we say of a church, that the set number, how many it should consist of, cannot be determined, yet there must *ad minimum* be two or three gathered together in God's name (as it is set down, Mat. xviii.), or else it is no church, one saint alone not sufficing to make up a church, so I say of this sacrament, though how often *at most* it *may* be administered cannot be determined (for it may be administered every day, as it was in the primitive times), yet how oft *at least* it *must* be administered was to be determined, so to set bounds unto man's neglect, and fix the institution.

Use 4. If the Lord's day be thus primarily appointed for these ordinances, and they for it, you see then the error in appointing any other day electively for the Lord's supper, as Christmas day, &c. Besides their missing of that blessing which attends the instituted day of this ordinance, they furthermore set up days like God's, and prefer them to his, and yet thereby do afford this evident beam of light to us, that such an ordinance honours a day, for to that end was the sacrament appointed by them to be on those days celebrated; and so does this ordinance and the like honour the Sabbath, which is sanctified by them.

CHAPTER VI.

Some cases concerning the time of the administration of ordinances resolved.

Upon what hath been hitherto treated of concerning the administration of the Lord's supper every Lord's day, and the grounds thereof, there is a just occasion, or perhaps a necessity, of propounding and of answering some queries about other ordinances. Some cases of difficulty are to be discussed, and which are indeed the greatest difficulties and knots in this question.

1. It is to be considered what interest this ordinance of the Lord's supper hath in the Lord's day comparatively to other ordinances, and whether by institution this ordinance is to be administered, whatever be done about others;

And, 2, if all have an interest also, then if the case should be that the time and state of the congregation cannot permit that all should be administered, it is to be considered which of them should rather be cut short or give way.

To resolve these cases. First, in general, to prevent mistakes, I premise these two propositions:

1. That there is no such institution of any ordinance that all other ordinances should give way to it, or that by institution this or that of necessity you must have, whatever become of others. It is true, indeed, there is a general ordinance that sanctifies all ordinances, as every creature is sanctified by prayer, as Paul to Timothy speaks. We are to pray afore the administra-

tion of every ordinance, as occasion is; but such prayers came in but as appendices and handmaids waiting and attending upon those ordinances. They come to have a room, not upon their own title or interest primarily, and *ex se*, of themselves, by a special proper institution that gives them this substance, but, as adjuncts and attendants of those ordinances, that when any of them is to be administered, then prayer necessarily must be before to sanctify it. But this is but a dependent secondary title and interest that such prayers come to have in the virtue of those other ordinances, as, where the lady goes, the gentleman usher goes also, but for her sake only. Thus, although prayers go before, yet in the right of that ordinance that follows.

But otherwise, take these kind of public services (which you have here, Acts ii. 42, and which are commanded, 1 Tim. ii. 1), as they make up an ordinance instituted as distinct from all the rest, and that stands alone and is a substantive ordinance, and so know that this ordinance so taken is not of that absolute singular transcendent institution that this must be, whatever be done with the rest. They are all second commandment institutions, and must have alike their turn. They are children all of one father and of one rank. The eldest, which is prayer, is not ennobled above the rest, that it must have a subsistence, whatever becomes of the younger brethren.

2. The interest which by institution any ordinance hath, is not such but that, in cases that may fall out, any of them may give way to another, or all of them may give way to one; for besides the necessity of the institution, there may be a superadded necessity by circumstances, that either now a particular ordinance must be administered, or it cannot at all, or not to that full purpose, be administered as is meet, and so God's name would be taken in vain. So it may fall out in the admission of or excommunication of a member; and so it may seem to have fallen out in that case, Acts xx., that Paul preached out the time of the Lord's day, and administered the sacrament at night when the Sabbath was ended.

For as he was an extraordinary officer, so therefore his preaching was more than an ordinary ordinance. It had a superadded power of infallibility went with it; and though it was still but an ordinance of the second command, yet it was an ordinance extraordinary, and which they could enjoy but once, and at that once receive a foundation to build their faith upon, and raise other sermons upon that foundation all their lives. Yea, and it is to be considered that they could seldom enjoy him in that way of God's institution, for his office was to go up and down. And it is to be considered too that he was in the heat of preaching, and though he broke off in a case of absolute necessity to restore a man to life, yet he would not break off for another ordinary ordinance; for that work, as in his hand it was performed, was greater.

And so that place (wherein he says, 'I was not sent to baptize, but to preach') is to be understood, for his preaching was an apostle's, his baptizing was but as an act of another man. The one was as an extraordinary ordinance in his hand, the other was but as ordinary, yet it doth not follow from hence that ordinary preaching is to be preferred to baptizing.

Now there may (I suppose) fall out cases wherein there may a circumstantial necessity fall out superadded besides that of simple institution, and then an ordinance that hath place merely by institution may give way, as ordinances instituted do to works of necessity as well as mercy. And there may be a necessity of mercy come to be annexed to the administration of an ordinance by some special circumstances; and then an ordinance that hath

but the mere necessity of an institution must needs give way, as it doth to other works of necessity, but still not by virtue of any transcendent singular institution.

The rule of no institution is such but an impediment may come in, and no ordinance is so instituted but it may give way to another.

But to come nearer to the case, the question may either be made of this ordinance in comparison with the continual ordinances, prayer, preaching, &c.

Or, 2, the question may be of occasional ordinances, as baptism, admissions, &c.

1. If the question be limited to continual ordinances, which of them hath more interest?

I answer, They have, by institution, interest alike; but yet so as one may have in order the priority afore the other, as, 'Let first of all prayers,' these public prayers, 'be made,' &c., 1 Tim. ii. 1. He speaks of ordinary church meetings, as appears throughout that chapter; so that prayer hath the first place by institution. And then the preaching of the word seems to challenge the next place, and the administration of the Lord's supper the last; but whether after all other or no, I yet know not.

2. Some ordinances may, for the meet administration of them, require more time, or else they are lamely administered. So preaching may be oftener, and require more time. I observe the phrase used, Acts xx. 11, 'When Paul had talked a long while,' as we translate it; but in the Greek it is ἐφ' ἱκανόν, when he had said what was fit thoroughly to instruct them in what their necessities required, when he had said enough.

It is certain that there is time enough for all standing ordinances and continual ordinances upon this day, and so as none of them will take up time, so as to cause one to give way to another, and their interest by institution is alike.

But, 2, the question will most fall upon occasional ordinances, and, if so stated, I deliver my judgment with submission herein.

1. That the interest which continual ordinances have in the Lord's day is (as I take it) more direct, immediate, proper, and constant, so as it is a more native primary interest compared with that which occasional have.

I call it more direct and immediate, for there is no third thing that comes between them to bring these two, viz., the Lord's-day and these ordinances together; but according to the ground formerly delivered, both being set and standing, they were made on purpose one for another, these for the day, and the day for them; that so to be sure God might have a solemn standing worship, and not occasional only; so as the time, the Lord's day itself, by institution calls for their administration and their existing. But as for occasional ordinances, the day doth not thus immediately call for them, but only as an occasion intervenes; thus baptism is required when a child is to be baptized.

Therefore the alliance between the Lord's-day and continual ordinances is, as that of a man's own kindred, immediate and direct, and of themselves, but that of it and the other ordinances but as of affinity by marriage, through some middle thing coming between that causeth it. And as it is thus more near, so more constant; and the constancy of any relation and tie-mutual makes a greater nearness than that converse that is by fits and times.

Men that stand in such a relation, one to another, that they must constantly meet together out of office or a set constitution, are, and ought to be, nearer one to the other in interest and respect, than those that use to meet but occasionally and by fits, when such or such a business falls out. Now

the Lord's day and other occasional ordinances meet but occasionally, but those that are continual are standingly yoked together with it, and meet by mere institution; and so their interest comes to be primary and native, and in the first place; for that God might have a standing worship at set times, both this day and ordinances were ordained. But the day being thus ordained for this standing worship, and so founded, occasional ordinances are administered also; and the church then meeting by institution, they are fitly administered then. It is as in founding colleges, where the founders build chambers and places of public resort for scholars indefinitely, but between the scholars the statutes do put this difference, that some are scholars of the house, as we call them, and of the foundation, which, that the college might be sure to be upheld as a society, have a set pension and places of maintenance, that the college may not be dissolved; and others are pensioners, for whom the statutes provide that such should be admitted also; but yet the primary, native, original foundation and interest, is that of scholars of the house, who are therefore preferred to chambers, &c., before others; and the other is but the interests of strangers that are added to them, and have room amongst them by the founder's will. And hence (as I take it) is the denomination of your meeting and assemblies more frequently given to these continual ordinances, even by reason of their primary original native and constant interest as the ground of it. Thus here it is said, Acts xx., 'When they meet to break bread,' and, 1 Cor. xi. 20, their coming together in all those places is mentioned as if only it were for the sacrament. Now the reason is, because they are primarily and constantly to meet together for these ordinances; and the Lord's day being first ordained for these, other ordinances came to have a fit season also, by reason it is a sanctified time, and the church is then to meet. This seems to be the way made for the administration of an occasional ordinance, as, 1 Cor. v. 4, for excommunication, when ye are gathered together, then to deliver such an one to Satan; but for the sacrament, they meet to eat, and the meeting is denominated from it. Now as an house is denominated theirs rather who are the standing dwellers than occasional incomers, that for an occasion have a room in it, so it is here. As the gospel and ordinances of it are called the heavens in Scriptures, as Ps. xix. 1, Rom. x. compared, so these standing ordinances are appointed, as the sun and moon that divide and constantly rule this day; and other occasional ordinances are as the stars, that have their influences in their seasons, Job xxxviii. 32.

2. The second thing whereby I express myself in the comparison of these two ordinances' interest in this day is, that, answerable to this more direct and primary institution of these, each for other, it comes to pass that a more special blessing doth mutually arise from the administration of continual ordinances. God, when he sanctified and instituted this day, blessed it also; which blessing is actually derived to us through those ordinances administered upon it, as those whereby the day is sanctified; and he, in like manner, sanctifying these continual ordinances for this day, blessed them by ordaining a special blessing from their administration by this day. The day blesseth the ordinances more, and the ordinances convey the blessings put upon the day, which, I say, ariseth from this primary fundamental institution; so that though you may have a sacrament of the Lord's supper on the week-day, and so likewise the preaching of the word (as was said), yet there is a further blessing on them may be expected on this day than any other.

So as, put the case you could meet conveniently enough for your occasions for a sacrament on the week-day, and therefore would defer and put off the Lord's supper from the Lord's day, yet you should choose rather to have

it on the Lord's-day, for there is a special blessing on it that day, which, through the mutual ordination of one for the other, is bestowed upon it, so as that very reason should sway it rather to the Lord's day.

But now, for an occasional ordinance, I do question, and do but propound it, whether there be such a special blessing that ariseth upon it, from this day rather than another day, so as a congregation should rather put themselves to some inconveniences to have all such ordinances administered on the Lord's day than on the week day, merely for the blessing's sake which the day brings upon them. And my reason is, because they being occasional ordinances, and occasions calling for them, receive their special blessing (if any there be) from time or season, or from their occasions, and so as their occasions give them existence, an *esse*, so also the fittest season that is suited to such occasions in respect of occasional circumstances, gives them their *bene esse* or *melius esse*, their better being. So for baptizing a child, as when a child is born to any of you, an occasion calls for the being of this ordinance; so those circumstances of time, whether on the week day or the Lord's day, as shall suit best with the good or avoiding the hurt of the child. The conveniency of the parents, who may be to go a journey, and the occasions of the congregation, do give the pre-eminence to the administration of this ordinance. And the same may be said as to admission of members, &c.: we are not simply, for the Lord's day's blessing, to affect to have these ordinances on the Lord's day, notwithstanding other inconveniences; but we ought to insist on it to have the Lord's supper on the Lord's day, for it is the work of the day, and the day is appointed for it.

But though baptism is an ordinance to be administered but once, and so (if a greater blessing could be supposed to accompany it on the Lord's day) it were much rather to be desired upon it than any other day, yet we see the apostles in the Acts did baptize presently upon any day, as Philip baptized the eunuch in his journey, and Paul baptized the jailor's family, &c. For the deferring it was not worth any special blessing conveyed by the Lord's day upon it, when all things else fell out to call for the administration of it; and therefore we are not bound to administer it on the Lord's day merely for the blessing's sake.

Now then, to sum up the solution of the case.

1. If all ordinances, both continual and occasional, can be administered on the Lord's day, as conveniently every way as on the week-day, they should. The reason is, because it is sanctified time, instituted for ordinances; neither is any other time instituted.

2. If all ordinances cannot be administered on that day, then, I suppose no one continual ordinance is in the frequency of it so far to be preferred, as that it should be continually on this day, and another should give way. There is here to be observed the same rule which the apostle gives for prophesying of all. If many be in a church, and all cannot prophesy at once, the rule is, that two or three should do it at one time, and two or three at another, and that by course; so, say I, let ordinances take their course in their omissions, and no one be preferred to the rest, but let it go by a series one by one, as the apostle there says, 'that all may prophesy.'

These are rules given by command for ordering ordinances, and suit with right reason (so ver. 37) when ordinances have a like interest.

3. Or, thirdly, that all may be administered every Lord's day, there must be the less time given to every one. For that also is a rule to order prophesying of brethren by, which have a like right and interest (so ver. 30), let the first hold his peace, that is, so contract himself that another may speak, to whom God may have given a revelation as well as to him, and

therefore he must not take up all the time. The like, I say, is to be observed with respect to ordinances.

Or, 4, the assemblies may begin sooner; and though some cannot come so soon, yet when the most may, let them begin, and the rest come after. For, though for a special reason ye are to stay each for other for the sacrament (as 1 Cor. xi.), because it is a badge of the communion of the whole, yet I know not whether we should always thus stay for all other ordinances, for it is better that some few should want part and the beginning of the worship, that the whole may enjoy all.

Now, these things I speak in case the church cannot meet on other days (as it seemed these in Troas, Acts xx., could not; for Paul stayed seven days for an opportunity to preach), which may also be the case of some churches that are poor and numerous.

But in case the church meet upon other days, and occasional ordinances so increase, as you cannot have all upon the Lord's day; or the inconvenience otherwise is such you cannot; then,

1. For the reasons above given, you should defer occasional ordinances (as you use to do) to other days, and keep up the solemn standing worship by these continual ordinances.

As I apprehend it, the Lord's day is electively to be taken for breaking bread, but not so for admission, excommunication, &c.; and in that case you are to defer occasional ordinances rather for this reason also; for being to be done but once for all, it is all one on what day: it is no loss to defer any of them to the week day, or another Lord's day; but if you omit a Lord's supper upon this day, it is an irreparable loss. There is one Lord's supper less in the course of Sabbaths in your lives, and the loss cannot be made up. It is the loss of a good thought in its season; but in the other case, *omittitur non amittitur*, there is a delay, but not a loss.

And, 2, there may be such circumstances in occasional ordinances as will make their administration much better on a week day than on the Lord's day. An admission may require haste, through some journey to be taken by the party, or the like. So, a man's sin may be so ripe and high, as I would not have his excommunication deferred an hour longer, that so the church may clear itself.

Obj. But here comes in the objection, that there is no time under the New Testament on which, out of duty, Christians are bound to meet, but the Lord's day. There is no other time instituted, and therefore it is to be supposed that the general rule that binds all churches is, that all ordinances should be on the Lord's day only.

Ans. I answer, That, indeed, there is no other time singled out by institution to oblige them to assemblings together but the Lord's day. But yet there is a command to meet upon other days when pressing circumstances urge to it, and their occasions will permit. The same command that lies on Timothy to preach the word out of season, lies upon churches to hear out of the proper season assigned by institution. Other circumstances may press to a necessity of a duty as well as an institution may; and so may oblige to meet on the week days, as well as institution obligeth us to meet on the Lord's days. And if still the condition of any church be such (which yet ordinarily we see by weekly lectures general in city and country it is not), that they cannot meet on week days; but occasional ordinances multiply so as that they, and all continual ones, cannot be administered on the Lord's day; then, say I, let some of the continual give way at such a time; for if the case be that an occasional ordinance may not be administered at all, if not on that Lord's day, or that it will otherwise be deferred too long, then, rather

omit the practice of a continual ordinance rather than that occasional one should be so hazarded. And the reason is, because that occasional ordinance is a thing to be done but once; and rather than not have a child baptized at all, and die ere baptized, it were better to lose a Lord's supper, which you may have every Lord's day. The Lord's supper you have always with you, but not the other.

CHAPTER VII.

Whether a church of Christ may lawfully make an agreement among themselves to divide themselves into several parts, and to have the sacrament of the Lord's supper administered to one of those parts one Lord's day, and so successively to every part of the church.

I need not prove the first principle of a congregational church, and its being appointed by God as the seat of his public worship and ordinances. I have already proved it, and may take it for granted by those who profess congregational principles with difference from others.

The papists, professing a visible church catholic, &c., do allow the dispensation of this ordinance of the Lord's supper *vagè* and unlimitedly. Hence they have private masses, and they think a priest, and one more, to be enough for the performance of them, and also for the giving and receiving the sacrament.

Our episcopal divines, professing a national church, allow a private communion to a party that is sick, in case of that necessity.

Our presbyterian brethren, that profess a national principle, and that every ordained minister is a minister to the whole church, do assert, that if several Christians meet, and one such minister be with them, he may (especially in difficult times) administer the ordinance to them, though he hath no special relation of being a minister to them as a congregational church, and though those Christians have no particular relation of members one to another.

In Scotland, also, a good and holy minister, in repute, cometh to a place, and when thousands of people gather about him from far and near to hear him preach, ordinarily such a minister useth to administer to them the sacrament also.

That which is my design is to find out what of a church is the true and proper seat of this ordinance of the Lord's supper.

The seat empowered for this, or any ordinance, is a matter of great moment, and it is not a circumstance such as a local place is, and as 'houses to eat and drink in' are. This is but a mere circumstance of place, but (as the apostle speaks) of this ordinance the church of God is unalterably the seat, as the opposition there shews, 1 Cor. xi. 22. Such circumstances the church may and doth appoint, but the proper seat of an ordinance instituted is another manner of thing.

The passover (which this ordinance doth succeed) had an whole family appointed for the seat of it: Exod. xii. 46, 'In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house,' &c. Afterwards it must not be celebrated in any city, but in a family in Jerusalem: Deut. xvi. 5, 6, 'Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee: but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.' Unto which (as holy Ainsworth says in his

discourses of the communion of saints) a New Testament church answers as the seat of ordinances.

Now that which I shall first do is, to find out whether this ordinance of the Lord's supper hath not a proper seat for it, with difference from other ordinances of worship that may be administered everywhere. I mean not as to the circumstance of place, for that the apostle hath determined: 1 Tim. ii. 8, 'I will men pray every where,' as to place, and so the sacrament may be administered any where for place. But as the ordinances of discipline have, beside the place and circumstance of place for meeting, a proper seat of a church ('Do not you judge them within?' 1 Cor. v., that is, within yourselves, and that are of you), so the inquiry is, Whether this ordinance also hath not a *sedes propria*, a seat proper to it, with difference from ordinances, and what that may be?

This inquiry I shall manage by considering,

1. Our own commonly received principles hitherto; and see what they do necessarily (if retained) drive us up unto.

2. I shall consider how the Scriptures will fall in to confirm and suit with that, which by those principles shall be found to be the *propria sedes* of this ordinance.

We use to make a statue by cutting away of matter, as in carving a statue out of freestone, and so in what is left a form ariseth, and it bears the image of what we intend (as well as we do it by adding to of matter, as in making a statue of plaster, &c.); and so here *præscindendo*, or by cutting away what will not serve for a *sedes*, the true form in such and such a matter will discover itself.

Now, according to our congregational principles received, I believe, we will agree in these particulars that follow, and if not, let the breach be made where any one thinks meet to make it upon them.

I shall in the first place set them down by way of narration; the use and benefit of which narrative will be to help us to discern the special value and tendency of this ordinance of the Lord's supper, which, when all is done, must regulate this case. And also, by degrees, each of those particulars added to others coming up so far to the conclusion, thereby both the state of the question will be seen, yea, and perhaps some demonstration of it spring out of all, at least to convince your judgments of the final conclusion, which is this.

A congregational body to Christ or church, considered as such, and met as such, is the proper sole seat of this ordinance of the Lord's supper, with difference from other ordinances of worship and other meetings. Now towards the proof of this I advance by these steps:

1. That if the whole congregational church were met, it must be a minister who must dispense this ordinance, let the necessity of the ordinance be what it will. Observe this, that in cases of the most absolute necessity, none will admit any other than a minister to administer it; and your best ground for that is (which I shall own), that we read not that any other but such administered it, or baptism, in the New Testament; and everywhere we read, that where the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered it was by an whole church, and so the argument for the negative is for this cause as good as for that other, viz. that ministers only should administer it; nay, we have more instances of the one than the other. And this also shews a manifest difference of the Lord's supper from other ordinances. For if we consider public prayers or preaching, gifted brethren in cases of necessity may administer them; and yet you will not say this is common to the Lord's supper, which none but a minister may administer. However, for this first

difference betwixt this and other ordinances, there must be some reason in the nature of the ordinances themselves (for that it is the thing which in the first place I inquire), that should require and admit such a difference.

2. The qualification of being a church member, or of being in the order, as I may call it, Col. ii. 5, of that state, is also as requisite as to a person's receiving the Lord's supper, as that the person administering it should be in the order of preaching eldership. This is acknowledged also, insomuch that the holiest man in the world (and who is known to all that society to be such, and to be utterly remote from the least jealousy of scandal), who owneth not a relation to some church membership, would not be admitted to this sacrament by any of our churches when met together.

3. The third case is this: if some members out of each or all congregational churches in England were met together in a town, and a minister of that town were met with them (where some one congregational church resides, but yet, where at that time that church he belongs unto as minister are not met, but yet there is such a full congregation of such saints mentioned with testimonials from their respective churches), he, according to our principles, could not administer the Lord's supper to them, and yet they are all qualified for it in this respect, that they are in the order of a church, and in a church state as church members, so as the defect that it was in, in the former case, is taken away also hereby.

And if it be said they cannot be administered unto, because he that is the minister is not their proper minister; but not because they are not capacitated themselves for it, I add these steps more still by putting further cases in the way of answer to this, and to shew that this defect is ultimately resolved into this, that, indeed, they are not a church, for that is the ground of any man's being their proper minister.

4. If any apostle were present, he could not administer this ordinance to them. We may make this supposition, for in the primitive times it might, *de facto*, have fallen out. Therefore, the above-mentioned defects doth not lie in their not having a proper minister, for an apostle, having an universal relation of office to all churches and saints, would be (so far as being a minister of all parts therein lies) sufficiently qualified.

5. But still there is a defect why this company of men could not have the Lord's supper administered to them, and that, although qualified in being each a member of some church; and where lies the obstacle but in this, that they are not one particular church, or members of one and the same church amongst themselves; so that an apostle's presence and power doth not extend to supply that defect, any more than to make a company of disciples a church without their coalition first so to be. We use to say that a company of elders met in a synod cannot have the sacrament together, if Paul were with them, although they each do represent particular churches. So as still (according to us), the administration of the sacrament farther depends upon these being one in the same individual particular church fellowship, which can be said of no ordinance else whatever.

6. If two or three of that church were met, and a teaching elder with them, he might pray with them, preach to them, &c., but not administer this ordinance. The evangelist Philip and the eunuch alone went together, and he could baptize him, but he could not have administered the Lord's supper to him; so as still it is not sufficient that members of the same individual church be met with a teaching elder. Thus, still the administration of this ordinance advanceth itself and climbeth up further and further towards its having for its seat that company of believers which ought to be accounted an whole particular church.

7. It is not a number of the members of the same church met with a teaching elder which your principles will allow capacitated for the administration of this ordinance. Yea, though it be supposed a number of so many and of such persons, that if there were a church to be begun, there were a sufficient number for to make a church (be it the *minimum quod sic* of seven, as Mr Cotton says, or of ten, as in a synagogue, or of eleven, as Christ's disciples were when Judas was gone forth). Yet your principles will not allow it. For,

1. Then any such number met with a teaching elder for other religious worship might in the end say, Let us have the sacrament also in the close, since God hath been with us in the other ordinances, and we are sufficient for number. But this you would not allow.

2. If there be a church of five hundred, and as many teaching officers as were in the church of Antioch, Acts xiii. 1, who would accordingly meet in so many several parcels as they had teaching elders over them (one teaching elder meeting with one parcel of many of them, another with a second *many*, a third with a third *many*, and so on), and would multiply their meetings according to the number of their elders, this you would not allow neither; especially you would not admit such several meetings for the Lord's supper at one and the same time. This yet is a case supposable, and it may be put.

Now by cases put, we having brought the matter thus high and thus near, it is to be considered what is here yet wanting or to be superadded to capacitate and endow them with power for this, that the Lord's supper may be administered in this case! Let any man of us either make a breach upon some or all of these principles, or assign wherein the defect lies; and as Peter said, What should forbid that these should not be baptized? so let us inquire what doth forbid or hinder why these should not be the seat of the Lord's supper when so met, and where there are all requisites materially for it.

1. Saints in the order of church fellowship.

2. In the same individual church fellowship, and members one of another in that respect.

3. A teaching elder in proper relation unto them.

4. A need (perhaps) of edification of many of them; yea, and an earnest, spiritual, and special longing after it at the meeting, and a great preparation made by other ordinances unto it.

5. The common warrant (as for time) to receive this ordinance oft ('as oft as ye receive,' &c., 1 Cor. xi. 26), and so both season and time do meet also. There is,

6. A sufficient number as to the matter of a church to make an whole church according unto that to which any principles of any profession amongst us, episcopalian, presbyterian, or anabaptists, will say is required for a church, and so it is in that respect equivalent unto an whole church. Wherein should the impediment lie? I press any man to assign it; but he that doth it must assign such a ratio or condition of this company to be superadded yet to them, as (taking into his eye all the fore-mentioned cases) shall carry with it a difference and distinct ground, founded in the nature of the things, and he must compare them together.

1. With the case of many members of several other churches so met with an apostle, who yet may not receive the Lord's supper.

2. With the cases of two or three (but not arising to many) of their own church met with their own elder, &c., who yet may not.

And yet, 3, all these may enjoy any other ordinance of worship, prayer, &c., but not this.

And, 4, he must consider all these meetings to be of a distinct nature from a church meeting of the whole church that is so acknowledged, in which not the Lord's supper only, but any or all other ordinances of discipline, excommunication, &c., may be administered, which cannot be in any of the other companies. Let any, I say, whoever, weighing the premises, assign what *notio*, *conceptus*, or *ratio* (taking *ratio* for the *modus*, relation or respect put upon a thing), is a new or farther requisite to this company of many, &c., specified, and such a *notio* also as will bear warrant and afford a true ground of difference of such a church, both from the other assemblies mentioned, and will also state a difference of this ordinance of the Lord's supper from the other ordinances, according to the variation of the cases put, and he will find himself driven up to what I shall by and by assign.

For bring me two half-crown pieces, the one stamped, the other unstamped (which yet for matter and all such requisites belonging to the matter, &c., is *in valore*, in value, equivalent unto an half-crown that is stamped), yet the unstamped piece is not constituted current as money to that purpose of payment as the other is; so it is in the present case.

The seventh case propounded presents you with a *many* of members of one and the same church, enough to begin a church, &c, and yet you would not (out of times of persecution) in the modes of them propounded allow them capacitated for this administration; and yet they are *in valore*, in value, every way equivalent unto a church which is immediately capable of this administration. Let any man now say what is the stamp that is to be superadded unto such a company or companies? Till others assign theirs, I shall present what I conceive *in abstracto* this formal reason to be, viz., that a company of saints, &c., met, must be endued with this superadded formality, with this *nova ratio formalis instituta*, that it is a distinct body unto Christ, wherein the members are united to one another as such, with distinction from other churches that are also instituted bodies to Christ. And this is that company which, having an officer or teaching elder over them, are the *propria sedes*, the proper seat, for the administration of this sacrament; and unless this consideration is or can be justified to be in such or in any company, they are not capacitated for this ordinance of the Lord's supper. For otherwise it is not their number, and their being members of one and the same church, and their meeting with an elder, who is their own elder, that will empower them for this ordinance.

1. In general, that there must be some farther *formalis ratio*, some *conceptus* or notion superadded unto the materials of former instances (especially that last put), is evident.

1. Because all things that go to complete the matter do meet in that last instance.

There is, 1, a many; 2, many of the same church; 3, they are met with their own teaching elder; and yet they are defective, and are not the proper seat of the Lord's supper.

2. Because there must some difference and distinction arise (besides what ariseth from these persons as the matter in this company), whereby they do and may become *propria sedes* of this ordinance, with difference from all the former instances. Now, differences arise properly from the form, and so it must be *nova ratio formalis*.

3. It must be something instituted, a *ratio formalis instituta* (as I said).

1. Because it is that which must make a difference and distinction from,

1. A company of saints in no church fellowship.

2. A company of saints in several church fellowships.

3. From two or three of the same church fellowship.

4. From a many of the same.

5. And so as that whereas any such company of the former may partake of any other ordinance of worship, yet not of this. That which must be to put the difference, must be *ratio formalis instituta*, as take as many men for number and (every way qualified and enabled, &c.) as are sufficient to make a corporation fit to enjoy such or such privileges, yet they must over and above be empowered by charter, and over and above have superadded the seat of their being a corporation by a civil institution; so it is here.

2. Now, secondly, for the demonstration of that particular *formalis ratio instituta* assigned, viz., that an instituted body to Christ, considered as such, is the only proper seat for this ordinance, I shall proceed,

1. By removing all suppositions I can think of or that have been suggested, or what may be pretended to give the stamp or institution, so as it will still remain that nothing else but such a company as I have before defined, may assume and take on them to be an instituted body to Christ.

1. It is not a *par ratio*, a parity of reason. The church is said to have prayed for Peter: Acts xii. 5, 'Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.' And this was done by two several meetings at least, and so by parts of the church: ver. 12, he came to an house where 'many were gathered together praying;' and another company was elsewhere, as appears from what Peter says, ver. 17, 'Go tell these things unto James, and to the brethren;' and the words that follow are, 'And he departed, and went into another place.' But yet all this will no way come up to evince the matter we are upon, nor warrant that the stamp of being a church may be put upon every assembly of many, nor will it follow that the church may meet in parts for the Lord's supper.

1. Because prayer is such an ordinance as may be exercised by a church by parcels, and those parcels may be fewer or more, whether their officer is met with them or not, as in one of the former instances was alleged that one elder meeting with one sick person may pray with him, whereas if all the elders met with that person they would not be capacitated to administer the Lord's supper to that sick person. For if this had been the manner then, or an apostolical practice, the apostle James had as fit an occasion to have made mention of it, and to have enjoined it to be administered also by them, as well as to pray over them, &c.; for the sacrament is as needful for the soul of such a person as prayer, &c. is for their body.

It may also be said that any two of the church, and the whole church by two and two, may meet to pray for any business of importance, but you will not say they may do so for this ordinance; yea, they may do so without any officer, as two or three may meet for prayer, but not so for this sacrament. And one reason is, because this ordinance is a communion of Christ's body, and of one with another therein; but it is not so in the other ordinance of prayer, so as there is *disparitas*, a disparity of reason. For it would be a strange assertion to say that two may meet for a communion of Christ's body as well as to pray, and thereby exercise the communion of saints, which cannot be done apart as well as by all or many together.

Obj. But the phrase of Acts xii. 5 is urged, that prayer was made of the church unto God for Peter (which how it was done the 12th and 17th verses shew, viz., that it was by parcels), and therefore the church may be said to meet in several parcels, the reply is,

Ans. 1. A question may justly be made whether that phrase of prayer being made of the church without ceasing, refers us unto those prayers that are afterward instanced to have been made by parcels of the church, or whether that phrase is not intended to shew how the whole church had, during

his being in prison, met and made prayers for him, for unto the former whole time of his having been in prison doth that speech refer (view the words and compare ver. 4), and those after-passages, vers. 12, 17, are but what fell out to be that night afore he was to appear next morning, ver. 6. But I will not at all insist on this, but will suppose that during this time of persecution all their meetings were by parcels as well as that night, though I believe that the assertion in the answer given can never be disproved. But,

2. Prayer may be said to be made by the church in parcels, and yet it may be affirmed that none of them were meetings of the church as a church, though yet, if two by two had in such minute parcels met, yea, if privately only one had earnestly prayed, it might have been said that prayer had been made by the church thus distributed.

For, 1, the word *church* in such a way of speech is taken materially for the members of the church, whether singly or otherwise; and when a thing is done by them generally either one way or another, it may be said the church prayed; and it cannot be inferred that they prayed together, no more than to say prayer was made by the churches would argue they all met together for one prayer. And that the phrase of *church* is so used in this book of the Acts is evident, for when it is said, Acts viii. 1, that there was 'a great persecution against the church,' the word *church* is materially taken. So the phrase, ver. 5, and those compared with it, vers. 12 and 17, will in no way evidence that these meetings were church meetings, or that they met *qua* church, and so they had not the stamp which we seek; they were barely meetings of several members of that church; and so the whole church, indeed, might be materially in the one and in the other, but still it was not there *qua* church.

2. The nature of the duty of prayer is unquestionably such as will admit a church to perform it by parcels greater or lesser, yea, in its members singly; and how, then, can we interpret this phraseology in Acts xii. to serve that purpose for which it is urged?

Nay, 3, the Holy Ghost hath warily penned it to prevent such an interpretation, for he styles the meeting of those in verse 12 (where it is said 'many were gathered together praying') in distinction from being a church, or the church, or a church meeting, and so in reality comes up but to that seventh or last instance we gave, of many of the same church meeting, to whom yet you would not give the supper. And as for the other company, who are called James and the brethren, we will suppose them met as these many, ver. 12, were; and yet so much is not said there, but the meaning may be that Peter bid them to go to their several houses. They are but the brethren with James, not the church, though James, their chief elder, had been met with them.

Yea, 4, there will fall out this contradiction to what is said in the 5th verse, if you say that these were each formal church meetings, for then it must have been said that they met in distinct churches, and not that that church *in singulari* met in each of these meetings, ver. 5.

(2.) It is not the will or consent of that which we must call the whole church (the πανήγυρις) that can have authority to set this new stamp of a church upon such partial meetings of its own members.

For, 1, though in law estates or titles are conveyed, both by the will of man in making his will, and by inheritance, yet here the adopting any or all of these meetings apart into the privilege of a church goes not by the will of man. But look what company is so met as by the will and institution of God the inheritance falls upon, they only are the church. The church's will gives not the stamp, but it must be such in the reality afore God.

2. If the will of the church had this pretended authority, then the whole

church may say of any such few or many of the members at any time met, that they are a church, and that others, though many, are not so. Yea,

3. Then it may be said of as many several companies that have each an elder with them, that they are so many churches; and if all these receive at the same time the sacrament, they would be so many churches made by that one whole church, and belonging to that one church, whereas an instituted church consists *in indivisibili*.

4. It is not considered enough that the authority of being a church is not *potestas vicaria*, nor *deputata*, a vicarious or deputed power; therefore the whole church cannot say, This shall be your church at such or such a time, for such or such an end.

3. It is not a case of necessity for the ordinance that will be argument sufficient for the administration of it to any such divided parcels of a church. For, put this case, that many of the same church are in case of great disconsolation, and therefore need this ordinance, or that they have not had this ordinance of a long time administered to them, and one of their proper ministers were with them; yea, put the case of necessity, which the papists and our episcopal divines put, that two or three or more are sick and weak in a great family belonging to one church, and being near death in all view, they as greatly long for, yea, more need this ordinance, *in agone mortis*, in an agony of death, than any other company of church members in case of persecution. Neither of these cases will be allowed to be such a necessity as would make or constitute such a meeting to be a body unto Christ, instituted with difference from another part of that church.

CHAPTER VIII.

Whether, in case of apparent danger of life, loss of estate rationally foreseen, or in case of violence and force causing ordinances to cease, there may not be a prudent forbearance or secret avoidance.

The rule our Saviour gives, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' is our measure and standard to forbear ordinances in the case mentioned, for it is mercy which God would rather have. Sacrifice was the eminent ordinance of the Old Testament in all the ages of it, yet, it being but a duty of the second commandment or instituted worship, and not of the first, it yields unto mercy, as also the duties of the Sabbath do, as our Saviour Christ hath also declared and paralleled that with the duties of the second command, Luke vi. 1–4.

But I shall give instances of such a forbearance which confirm this, and shew the extent of this rule:

1. I shall produce instances out of the Old Testament.

(1.) Jacob fled from his father's house when Esau had but spoken words of threatening: Gen. xxvii. 41, 'And Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. And these words of Esau, his elder son, were told Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said to him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.' Here was but a hearsay and report of Esau's intention, and yet thereupon his mother advises him to flee to Laban, to Haran, ver. 43, but to do it only to avoid the present distress, hoping his brother's fury would be over, as the word is: ver. 44, 45, 'And tarry thou with him a few days until thy brother's fury turn away, until thy brother's anger turn away from thee' (that

is, the fury of his anger be over), 'and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then will I send and fetch thee from hence.' And he did accordingly, and Isaac's blessing with him also (Gen. xxviii. 1–5), and was sent away by his authority. And yet, consider the case how it stood: He went away from his father's house, where God was worshipped and where sacrifices were offered, for so in the patriarch's families they were and had been from the beginning, from Adam, Abel, and Cain, and so on; yet to avoid this fury he fled to a family where a strange God was worshipped (for we read that Laban did swear to another God than Jacob did, Gen. xxxi. 53, viz. the God which Abraham and Nahor had worshipped before Abraham's conversion: Joshua xxiv. 15, 'The gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood.' That Laban was an idolator also appears by the said Gen. xxxi. 30, 'Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?' compared with ver. 34), and his flying was but a matter of prudence, it was but for a danger threatened; he was not yet surprised, but it seemed rationally impendent. And also it was but for a time, but not for always, and his mother (as Ainsworth says) counselled him in faith; yea, and farther, Isaac sent him away with a blessing as from God. And there was this farther in the case, that he, having bought the birthright of his brother Esau, if his father (who was so old that he was stricken with blindness, and Esau, in his speech, had implied that it would not be long to his death) had died, it was he that should have officiated in the priest's office in the family, and have performed the worship of the family, as having bought the birthright, and so was the head thereof in that respect. How soon his father might die he knew not, and yet he fled, and fled upon this occasion and with this reserve, till his brother's fury should be over.

I might from hence urge an argument against what is ordinarily alleged by people in our times, who, in the case of eminent danger, tell their teachers and one another, You must trust God, and not avoid or forbear.

I reply, Why should not he have trusted God against such fears as these, which were indeed but from flying speeches of his brother? But because it was rationally probable that his brother would indeed have killed him, he therefore flies to avoid it; but when, indeed, God really did call him to trust him, as when his brother Esau came with four hundred men against him, he then trusted God and prayed it out; but in this case he was not called to do it, but wholly to avoid it rather.

2. To sacrifice and to worship God together in assemblies had been the religion of their forefathers, transmitted to them from before the flood, as appears from the first in the case of Cain and Abel, Gen iv. and from the 26th verse of that chap., 'Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord,' that is, to call upon him together. But while they were in Egypt, the people did forbear sacrifices and public worship: Exod. viii. 25–27, 'Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us.' *Videtur colligi non fuisse liberum;** it seems to be inferred that it was not free, *sacrificia offerre*, no not in their own dwellings for them to offer sacrifices; no, not in their own dwellings in Goshen, or if they did it they did it but secretly. And it is for certain that public sacrifices and meetings were not used; for it is but now granted as a special favour by Pharaoh: 'Go, sacrifice in the land,' as

* Rivetus in locum.

that which they had not done afore; and they forbore upon a prudential ground, when yet, according to the principles of trusting God in any case, &c., and if they were true they ought not to have forborne; they knew not infallibly and certainly that the people would stone them, and yet thereupon Moses says, 'It is not meet so to do;' ver. 26, 'For we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God.' Which argues further that they knew their fathers had offered up sheep and oxen; and so it was not out of ignorance that they forbore, as if they knew not what God would accept.

From the transactions of Moses, this may clearly also be argued, that if, in case any person be to enter into a state of church ordinances (which sacrifice was then more eminently in the room of), or to join with a set company and with a pastor suitable to them, &c., which hitherto they have not done, they may warrantably forbear and wait a due and fit season for it in a settled way. Or if a man intended to remove for ordinances to another country, he were not bound (perhaps for some good space of time) to enter presently into them in the place where he is, or upon the next opportunity which will present itself. Also in that case of a dangerous opposition from their relations, such as, by reason of their spirits and principles, do threaten to break all between them; we do use rightly in such a case to advise, that wives and children are not so bound up to do it, but they may forbear, to gain the consent of such relations. And our arguments we account strong, because, for present enjoyment, we are not to hazard or prejudice a future more settled and quiet enjoyment, which yet truly hath much of the case afore us. For we only profess to forbear at particular times, wherein there appears rationally a more certain danger, to preserve ourselves and our estates to enable us to enjoy them more frequently at other times, and not expend all our future enjoyments upon one present, and spend (as it were) the whole of all at once. And this is truly mercy, and is the same kind of sacrifice too, viz. for the future, instead of sacrifice at present.

Now all this is justifiably inferred from the case of the Israelites in Egypt, especially from the time that Moses presented himself as a deliverer unto them; for seeing deliverance was at hand, why did they not presently fall upon sacrificing? Why doth Moses defer the time, and not set upon it presently? It was not that the duty of sacrifice was not in force, for it had been (as Christ says of circumcision) from the fathers, and obliged them as well as their forefathers, especially when Pharaoh had given liberty, saying, 'Go, sacrifice in the land.' No, but he defers it, to work about another thing, viz. a total deliverance, and sacrificeth the present enjoyment they might have had unto the attainment of a future settled enjoyment. He forbears at present, that the present performing it for once might not hinder the future for a continuance.

3. During Saul's wicked reign, there was no frequenting the ark, which yet was the ordinance of God: 1 Chron. xiii. 3, 'Let us bring again the ark of our God, for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.' I omit David's flying from Saul, and complaining of his dwelling in Meshech, and his saying, 'Oh that I were a sparrow,' a 'doorkeeper in the house of God,' Ps. lxxxiv. 3, 10.

4. We have another instance in the case of the ten tribes all the days of the kings of Israel. There was in Elias's time seven thousand had not bowed to Baal, but they kept themselves from the defilement of idols conscientiously, 1 Kings xix. 18, and yet they went not into ordinances at Jerusalem, to temple-worship, nor did not during all those times, which were well nigh two hundred and fifty years, nor do we find them anywhere blamed for it.

Yea, and surely, had they been observant thereof, it would have been here remembered by God for the evidence of their sincerity, as well as that negative of not bowing unto Baal.

If the objection be, that of Jeroboam and the rest of the kings, it is indigitated that he made Israel to sin, namely, in their not going up to Jerusalem as well as in worshipping his calves;—

I *answer*, 1, that the sin of Jeroboam, and the kings that imposed both, did lie in both, viz. in restraining them from their going to Jerusalem as well as in requiring their worshipping his calves, and the ultimate aim on his part was to keep them from going to Jerusalem: 'If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.' Yet the sin imputed to the people is eminently if not limitedly said to be their worshipping of their calves: 1 Kings xii. 29, 30, 'And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.'

Ans. 2. The nation generally incurred the guilt of both, because they walked willingly after Jeroboam's commandment, Hosea v. 11.

But, 3, still those godly people who kept themselves from the worship of his calves (as certainly they did, as the prophets also did), and being under this hard restraint which hath been spoken of, and mourners for it, to them simply their forbearance to go up to Jerusalem was not imputed as a sin, nor is anywhere found to have been so charged on them.

And that the greatest of the prophets themselves did, in that as well as in other cases of danger, betake themselves to ways of prudence to secure and save themselves after the most heroic darings, and durst not abide by it, you have Elias for an example. Elias, indeed, once daringly offered a great sacrifice, and gained thereupon the people to kill eight hundred of Baal's priests, in the midst of Ahab's and Jezebel's reign, 1 Kings xviii. But when he had done, he stayed not by it, but to save himself he betook himself to his heels, and ran away, and went as far as his legs could carry him, clear out of all Ahab's dominions and reach, forty days' journey, even to mount Horeb, where the law was given, 1 Kings xix. 8.

Some further objections may arise from the adventures and seeming hazards of utter ruin, that many godly of the ten tribes at several times made to come to Jerusalem to sacrifice. There were three special times in which we read that many of that people, after the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, went up to Jerusalem to worship.

1. Then when the division had been first made by Jeroboam during the space of three years.

2. In the days of Asa of Judah, and Baasha king of those ten tribes, some fifteen years after Jeroboam's death, another eruption out of some of the ten tribes came unto Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xv. 9.

3. The third was just at the last, even but five years afore the final ruin of the nations.

Of any other times we read not (that I know of) of any one's going up, unless you will credit that which old Tobit says of himself: Tobit i. 6, 'I went often alone unto Jerusalem to the feasts;' and what the angel is brought in to say (chap. v.) of two more that accompanied him at some of those times. Yet there it is not he always went when it was duty as well to do so, but only often, and that he alone did it, not others of the godly of that nation in his days.

Now the circumstances of those three times specified, and the condition of

that people, are to be inquired into, that it may appear why then it was done by the godly, and not at other times (that are recorded), as that which will give a difference in the case, and give light to us in the point in hand, when to adventure and when not, for it will be found that none of these three instances, in the circumstances of them, will rise up to prove such an absolute obligation unto instituted ordinances, but as may stand with mercy shewn to ourselves in our lives, preservation of our lives, and of our families from ruin. I shall therefore make a particular inquiry into the circumstances of all these three.

1. As touching that first flush or breaking forth of goers to Jerusalem, when it was but young tide with Jeroboam and his government, we read, 2 Chron. xi. 13–16, 'And the priests and Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Rehoboam out of all their coasts. (For the Levites left their suburbs, and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord: and he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.) And after them out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.' But the circumstances of the times and conditions of the persons must be therein considered.

As, 1, that this was done at that time when this alteration, together with the government, was first made, and (which is to be taken along) was practised by the people but the three first years, as ver. 17 hath it; and although Jeroboam was thus rigid from the first towards the priests and Levites (of which by and by), yet it being the beginning of his government (when politic princes proceed by degrees), it may well be supposed that his being king depending much upon the people, he was a while more slack and conniving at the people; and indeed his first declaration (I call it so, rather than edict) concerning the calves, and their going up to Jerusalem, was (as to them) published in softer and milder, and but exhortatory terms, and without penalties that we read of at first annexed, as appears, 1 Kings xii. 28, 'Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel,' &c. It was but a presenting to them another worship, and trying first how it would take with them.

2. The condition both of priests and people is to be considered, to put the difference between this and other times.

1. Consider the condition of the priests and Levites, who began first, as vers. 13, 14. It is apparent that their removal was total and forced, and absolutely necessitated. They could not choose, unless they would become priests to serve Jeroboam's calves, for refusing which it was Jeroboam began with them. It was he and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office, 2 Chron. xiv., and so their livelihood and maintenance utterly ceased, for their portion always had been to live upon *jura templi*, upon the revenues due by God's law to the priests as serving the temple, as you read, Num. xviii., Deut. xviii., and Joshua xviii., all which ceased in Israel then with their non-execution of the priest's office. Only, it seems he left it yet free to them to continue in their dwellings; for it is said, those 'they left their suburbs,' as ver. 14; for, alas! what would that have conduced to their maintenance, they having no inheritance or lot of lands; but, on the contrary, if they would remove to Judah and Jerusalem (which at this dawn of his government it seems Jeroboam yet hindered them not from, but permitted them), there they had a service at the temple waited for them; for

in their courts they were there to serve. They had also a maintenance by God's appointment set out for them, and the priest's self-denial in this was but as that of priests and Jesuits now with us in England, who, if they be banished from thence, have yet colleges, and monasteries, and universities, to retire into, where they have employments and other service to do, and maintenance ready for them; which different case of theirs from others, who, if banished, have mere nothing to betake themselves to, is not enough considered and laid to heart. Yea, as things stood, it was every way their interest and advantage in this distress to take this course of resorting to Rehoboam out of all Israel.

Then, 2, for the people, who, after them (as it is said), both after that time and after their example, came to Jerusalem also; besides that (it was said) they as yet had no positive prohibition to the contrary (that we read of) further, it is not apparent at all that they did for these three years remove their stations from out of Israel, but keeping their houses and their lands still, did only go up to Jerusalem to sacrifice at the usual times; and so it is only said of them, 2 Chron xi. 16, 'They came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers;' and because this is spoken with an observable difference from what had been said of the removal of the priests (vers. 13, 14), that they also left their dwellings, &c., and that the people here are barely said to go to sacrifice, hence, therefore, it seems more than probable, that these people's going was only at the feasts for sacrifice, but they returned again to their own dwellings and livelihoods in Israel, as in former times they had been wont to do. And if so, then this clearly argues, that Jeroboam's laws (if any concerning them were yet made) were not as then so severe against the people's going up (that is, not for these three first years), as afterwards they were, when by the experience of their going up during those three years he saw that the kingdom of Judah was strengthened thereby, ver. 17. And that but three years are mentioned, argues that then they ceased any more so to go up.

On the other hand, if the case of this people had not stood thus free in this respect for those three first years (as hath been argued), but that they should be thought utterly to have quitted their station, it had been far harder with them than with the priests and Levites, and indeed unsupportable. And the vast difference between the case of the priests and the people (if thus stated) is very apparent; for the priests and Levites left but mere dwelling-houses, but had a provision for them, though perhaps less in Judah upon their removal; but the people, if they removed, were to leave inheritances in lands, vineyards, orchards, &c., which they already possessed in Israel, and that allotted them by God; which if Jeroboam had been so severe with them at first as is supposed, they could not have sold them neither, for he would have prevented them in that also; and if they had liberty to have sold them, it had been but for the time till the year of the next jubilee by the law, which to many would have been but little profit, for it was but twenty years at the utmost that the bishop of Armagh reckons them, others but fourteen, between Jeroboam's very beginning of his reign unto the next jubilee, which was the tenth. And when they should have come unto Judah, they could not have bought any other lands of inheritance there, for those that were that time dwellers already, had their inheritances fixed to them by divine right; they were *bona immobilia*, immovable goods, which they could not sell longer than the next jubilee, when they must have returned; and so these poor Israelites should have had nothing to have lived upon, no, nor to employ themselves in, in the land of Judah, if thither they had removed.

Neither had they any ground (for aught I know that may be gathered out

of the story) to hope for any support or encouragement, either from that people of Judah or Rehoboam, who was not a godly prince, nor sincerely hearty to the cause of religion; but, 2 Chron. xii. 1, 'After he had established the kingdom (once), and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.' And in that former place alleged, it was but those three first years that he and they walked in the ways of David and Solomon, upon which it may therefore well be supposed that the godly people of these ten tribes ceased to go up to worship, though in the end he humbled himself, and things went well again in Judah, 2 Chron. xii. 12.

But then, that after those three first years Jeroboam's severity interrupted any from going up (as we read of that none did), is very likely and most probable; for of Jeroboam it is particularly said, that he began to use force and violence to keep the people from going up to Jerusalem, as the summary account which God gives why he removed that nation wholly at the last shews: 2 Kings xvii. 21, 'Jeroboam drave the people from following the Lord,' that is, from their going up to Jerusalem; for, indeed, in that did his main interest lie, and his calves was but a device to divert them to another worship; and that word, *drave from*, imports violence to have been used. And this way of severity, begun by Jeroboam, was continued by other of their kings, both by severe laws, as the statutes of Omri, mentioned Micah vi. 16, shew, whose statutes are therefore mentioned, because he, under more strict penalties than ever had been, enacted the observation of the things which Jeroboam had first brought in. For unto the level of what Jeroboam had done, Omri's wickedness is limited: 1 Kings xvi. 26, 'For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.' And therefore those his statutes in Micah are to be understood as more severely backing what Jeroboam had begun; and this Omri, who made these laws, began his reign not past thirty years after Jeroboam's death, so that it did rise up to the highest severities very soon. And as he was severe by laws, so also, by waylaying any that should go up to Jerusalem, which the Jewish writers do affirm their kings did, and how they set guards, and built watch-towers on purpose, at the passages and ways, to take and kill them that attempted to go to Jerusalem, and confiscated their goods; and they do say that that place, Hosea v. 1, is an allusion to that practice which their former kings had used upon mount Tabor and Mizpeh,* whereon (says the Jewish writers) they had placed watch-towers and sentinels, as gins and snares to catch any that should attempt to go up to Jerusalem;† these two places being outlets into the dominion of Judah from some part of Israel. And that this was one way and course taken up and continued by these kings, those scriptures do expressly relate. For of Baasha, that succeeded but two years after Jeroboam, it is there said, 'Baasha, king of Israel, went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.' Now Ramah was on the borders of Benjamin, in the way to Jerusalem; and one fresh occasion of this design had been that (as 2 Chron. xv. 9 relates it), many in abundance out of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Simeon, had fallen to Asa, and came out from those tribes to Jerusalem for the worship of God's sake. And Ramah, which he attempted to build, was the direct passage for those particular tribes to go into Judah by.

* See Rivet on Hosea v. 1.

† Jeroboam ut asseritur satis rationabiliter posuit custodes in terminis regni, ne quis de regno suo ascenderet in Jerusalem, et qui ascenderent caperentur et occiderentur et confiscarentur opera eorum.—*Tostatus* on 2 *Chron.* xi. quæst. 17.

The second outbreaking over the banks which the kings of Israel had raised up to restrain their subjects from inundations into Judah, is recorded 2 Chron. xv. 9–13, 'He' (viz., Asa) 'gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon (for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him); so they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered unto the Lord, the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their soul, that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.'

We see this was a flowing in abundance, and there were two persuasives of them to it: 1, God's prospering Asa; 2, their desires to worship God. Yet here in like manner the circumstances of that juncture of time, as also of the persons (who and what tribes these were), are to be duly weighed, and will still serve to contribute light to us in this great point, both as under what rationally probable apprehensions men are called to adventure for the enjoyment of ordinances in the times of such distress, as also in what cases and circumstances they are to do it.

1. As to the persons (who and of what tribes), although the number of them was in a great abundance, yet but three tribes only are specified; and so interpreters do much narrow it unto the godly of these tribes, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon. To clear which it must be further considered,

1. That a good part of Ephraim (called elsewhere in this story mount Ephraim, 2 Chron. xv. 8, that is, the mountainous part of that country) had been already brought under the dominion of the king of Judah since Jeroboam's revolt; first, some by Abijah, this Asa's father: 2 Chron. xiii. 19, 'Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him: Bethel with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof;' and those cities were not recovered again by Jeroboam or their kings, as verse 20 shews. Then again more and other cities had been taken by this king Asa himself, 2 Chron. xv. 8.

Other cities were taken by him, besides the former by his father, for it would not have been first there, and then again so expressly over and again said that Asa had taken cities, if they had been no other than those cities his father Abijah had taken afore him; and all these Jehoshaphat possessed in his time also, as that 2 Chron xvii. shews. Now, this part of Ephraim bordered upon Benjamin, which was in the tribe of Judah's lot, as in Joshua xvi. and xviii. appears.

Then, 2, the tribe of Simeon here specified lay so near the tribe of Judah as it had been anciently a part thereof, and reckoned within it, Joshua xix. 1. And then the three tribes, viz., Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin, were adjoining to one another, Joshua xvi. and xvii.

So all these being immediate borderers, and some of the cities being already become the dominion of Judah, no wonder if many of those tribes also fell in with Asa (especially if withal you take in the circumstances that follow), and perhaps further many whole cities of these tribes, besides those formerly taken by them, fell in, and not only particular persons out of them. And the way lying so open and fair to go forth out of these three tribes unto Jerusalem, it is the less wonder that they should in such abundance come up thither, whereas others of the godly tribes among them, lying further off and remote, were cooped up and utterly debarred, disabled, and invincibly hin-

dered from so falling in with him as these did, and therefore none of them are mentioned.

2. The circumstances of the time were exceeding promising and inviting of them thus to fall in. And they were such as I believe that every man will say that if any godly, zealous Christians were environed with the same in the like case, they would and ought to do the like in any age for the enjoyment of the ordinances of God. Let but the face of the sky and of the times be considered, with their difference from other times, as both by the prophecies of the prophets of that age and providence concurring they lay afore them then, and it must be said that it was in itself the best choice they could make for themselves (according as was meet for them to judge) to fall in to Asa, as things lay afore them, and to have done this, though there had not been this superadded invitement (the greatest of all other), that they should have the ordinances of God to boot. And this we may assert, although we suppose withal that many of them had quitted their possessions, for all needed not to do so in coming to Jerusalem, from which city, and the worship of God there, their brethren in other tribes were utterly debarred.

The circumstances of these persons who thus came to Jerusalem, were these:

In general, they had had many demonstrations and convictions from God of his wrath against their kings of Israel, and against the people who willingly continued to cleave to them, and who declared for this very thing of their calves, and for the driving of Israel from the true worship.

1. They saw an instance of this wrath of God, by propheey, and a miracle accompanying it, at the very altar of Bethel, one of the new chapels, whilst Jeroboam stood there to offer incense, the altar cleaving in two, and the ashes falling out, and the prophet crying out against it, Jeroboam's hand dried up whilst he stretched it out to lay hold on the prophet for so crying. You read the story of this 1 Kings xiii., and this fell out within the memory of these Israelites.

Then, 2, it would have amazed any man to have seen Jeroboam for ever after so unfortunate, to have observed that fatal slaughter of five hundred thousand men (a slaughter so great as was never read of afore or since anywhere in the world) out of an army of eight hundred thousand, and that but by half the number of the king of Judah's men; and this was done when the issue and trial of the battle was in an appeal to God, put upon this very gage and cause of Judah's retaining the true worship, and Jeroboam's having set up a false, 2 Chron. xiv. from the 4th verse to the end. To see these cities taken from him, yea, and his Bethel too, and himself so weakened as never to recover strength again.

Then, 3, it was an astonishing sight to see Jeroboam himself at last struck to death by some extraordinary immediate stroke of God: the Lord struck him that he died, says the text in the 1 Kings xiii. 19, 20.

Then, 4, it was an affrighting consideration to have propheey upon propheey issued forth against his house, and one of the loudest of them, as it were, drawn upon himself whilst he himself of his own motion would needs send his wife *incognito* and disguised to Abijah the prophet: 1 Kings xiv. 10–12, 'Behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel; and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat; for the Lord hath spoken it. Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house; and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall

die.' Of the certainty of the fulfilling of all which the prophet gave him a present and as sad a sign. 'The child shall die,' says he; and he names the very time and hour of his son's death: ver. 12, 'When thy foot enters the city.' And in the 14th verse he declares how it would be that God would raise up a king, viz., Baasha, that should execute and perform all this, and do it within a very small space. And when was it to be done? 'Even now,' says God, ver. 14; that is, I will not stay long, but make quick work with them; I will do it presently. And he performed all this accordingly on Jeroboam's son and all his posterity within less than two years, some say less than one, after Jeroboam's own death; and of this thing this people we are speaking of, who here fell in with Asa, knew; for these things, viz., both the prophecies and these events thereof newly fulfilled afore their eyes, were not done in a corner, and the people knew this very sin to be the cause of all this.

Then, 5, it must needs have a great influence on these persons, to have heard (which came home more to touch them) the same prophets with the same breath, to have denounced a fatal captivity and destruction of that whole nation of the ten tribes, as that which should be the end and issue of these sins: ver. 14, 15, 'Moreover the Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day; but when? even now. For the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and shall root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger.' And this is uttered indefinitely for time, for no time is set or named when it should be; for aught they knew, it might be that or the next year; and they having so signally seen the former part of that prophecy, *even now*, fulfilled, they might well tremble to think that this captivity and destruction threatened of the whole tribes might, they knew not how soon, come upon them and their posterity, together with the whole nation in common if they were found in the same sin.

Then, 6, another thing which had an influence upon them was, to behold the kings of Judah (these two last of them especially), one after the other, to be holy, good men, and every way to prosper; yea, even the grandfather of these two, Rehoboam (from whom God rent the kingdom), so to be favoured, that in his last times things went well in Judah; and after him his son Abijah, a godly prince, to have so great a victory as was mentioned, and to grow mighty thereupon (as in an opposition to Jeroboam's decay, it is spoken of him, 2 Chron. xiii. 21); and then to see this Asa now reigning, the third king, an holier man, to see how he still so prospered, as to have with a few so great a victory against the Cushites, as to rout an army of a million of men and more, 2 Chron. xiv., and to take all the spoil of them, together with the spoil of all the cities about Gerar from their confederates the Philistines.

And then, 7, it moved them when they saw, hereupon, a new prophet sent from God to Asa, and all his subjects and complaints with him to revive the memory afresh, and their ears to rehearse the sum of these things to them, and so spread afore them the infinite vast difference God had put between him with them of Judah, and the others, the people of the ten tribes; and this done on purpose, to hearten and encourage them that God would still be with them and reward their work, setting afore them what and how great miseries had followed one upon the neck of another unto those of the ten tribes.

Thus, in the beginning of this 15th chap. ver. 3, 'Now for a long season,' saith he (namely, from Jeroboam's setting up), 'hath Israel been,' ver. 3–6,

'without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they, in their trouble, did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country, Nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.'

The fourth verse Piscator renders, interpreting the whole round about it of the time past, that if so be Israel (namely, the ten tribes) had turned, when trouble was upon him, unto the Lord God of Israel, he had been found of them seeking of him. The vulgar translation reads all this in the future, as if the prophet laid afore them what for time to come would certainly be the condition of those tribes, as thus, 'Israel shall be for a long season (yet to come) without God, &c. And in those times there shall be no peace to him that comes out or in, but great vexation shall be,' &c., ver. 5, 6. And the original admitting either interpretation, I should take both to be intended; and I am sure that in the event and matter of fact, both had been the condition of these ten tribes, and had continued to be so more or less until their final captivity. But whether it be a narrative either of what had befallen them, or should hereafter befall them, or both, it serves all fully to the main purpose I cite the prophet for, which was to move and hearten them of Judah (who both had had, and he promiseth should have, for the most part clean contrary dispensations from God) to set up a reformation of the public worship of God, and together with them to hearten also the godly of the ten tribes (that possibly any way could do it) to come over unto them (as, ver. 9, we read they did), and to leave their interest amongst those ten tribes, and to give themselves up unto the Lord and his worship, as the most safe and secure allotment they in those times could any way betake themselves unto. And that the prophet speaks all this as of a different condition of Israel from Judah, is evident, both, 1, in that his speech was directed unto Judah and Benjamin, and that Israel are the persons spoken of; neither, 2, was it true that Judah had been for a long time without God, &c., but the contrary; and 3, the ten tribes were after their separation from Judah ὀνομαστικῶς, termed Israel; as also, 4, he tells them that Judah had enjoyed a clean contrary dispensation to this: the Lord (says he) is with you, ver. 2, and will be whilst you are with him. And so indeed he had been, from that first separation and rent made by Jeroboam from them until now. And that speech also you may put either in the time past, 'He hath been with you,' or in time to come, 'He will be with you;' the original hath left it free for either, or for both, in saying only, 'The Lord with you,' only the following words do carry it to the time to come.

These were the circumstances of this juncture of time, and after all these things thus related and urged by this prophet, thereupon that followeth immediately in the story, which also had followed as the consequent (at least) of this his exhortation, which surely was divulged by Asa in his gathering them together; ver. 9, 'And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them, out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon, for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.' So as this second ebullition and inundation of these three tribes in such abundance was effected in the view and intuition of all those things that have been mentioned; yea, and also in the virtue and strength of them it was that Asa did gather such numbers, which must have been by sending unto all Judah and Benjamin, and these tribes, inviting them to come in and to worship God at Pentecost at Jerusalem, ver. 10, and to enter into a covenant so to do, &c.

Now if we look round about the coast and face of these times, and view the posture of affairs, it will not be much material to inquire whether all these of the three tribes or others of the ten that could remove, had quitted their own possessions of lands, &c., in their respective tribes, and removed to Judah and Jerusalem to dwell therein.

It is most likely that many of these persons were necessitated to abandon their present possessions, by reason that the people of their respective cities that continued still under the king of Israel's dominion would see to it, that those who went out from them, should no more return to possess what they had amongst them, especially seeing those that went are said to fall into the king of Judah as unto their prince, and not only to have come to him for the present; yea, and to have entered into an oath and covenant to continue to worship God, &c. vers. 12–14.

It must still be withal remembered and carried along with us, that these three tribes were near borderers upon Judah; and so, although they had been inhabitants in some of the cities and towns under the king of Israel's dominion, yet, being borderers, they had a fairer and shorter passage to slip into Judah, or any of the cities in these tribes in the possession of Judah. It was but a day, or day and a half's, journey. Yea, and that a passage was at this time somewhat open for them so to do, may be argued from this, that Baasha, the present king of Israel, afterwards, upon this very occasion, did attempt to build Ramah to obstruct this passage (as the first verse of the next chapter hath it), which passage for these tribes therefore afore (and so at this time), lay more free for them to pass.

But this was not the present condition of the godly, their brethren in the other ten tribes, who were distant many days' journey, and who, if they would remove, must adventure far greater personal dangers of being taken and intercepted. Would not (think we) those hundred prophets, whom Obadiah hid in Ahab's reign, have much rather run away unto Judah, unto the good king Jehoshaphat, then reigning there, than to have lain hid in a cave, and live barely on bread and water? 1 Kings xviii. 4. As the times were harder, so the distance made the difficulty to have escaped far greater. These in the heart of those dominions, or utmost parts thereof, were more strictly watched, and encompassed, and hedged in, and utterly disenabled to remove whole families.

And the consideration of this difference between these three tribes and those others doth afford a great light unto the case in hand, viz., what hazards we are to venture, and what not.

But that which I urge and insist on in the case of those three tribes (that did remove, and had opportunity, without such dangers to do it), as to the solving any seeming objection that may arise therefrom, is, that supposing the loss of their estates at home (for that we will suppose), yet such a removal was simply and absolutely in itself best for them, and the best choice that possibly could be made by men, considering all those circumstances forementioned, and they needed not to have much debate or hesitance what to do.

The experience of so many former miseries which they and their countrymen had run through, like one wave treading on the neck of another, the foretelling that the same, or worse, would continue for a long season (as indeed they did), and then the certain prophecies of a final captivity at last, to dispossess them of all, and remove them to heathenish countries, which continueth even unto these our days, were considerations sufficient to make them change their abode, when they saw such changes of princes, usurpers

over them, made, and like to be made, as the curse of their revolt from the house of David; when they saw so unstable a government, unhinged, and like a reed in the water, tossed this way and that upon every alteration, so as they must needs make account to hold nothing that was their own in any certain way, but to tire out a dying life in fears and expectations of they knew not what calamities, nor how soon to come upon them; and when in the mean time they knew this to be certain, that the oppression of their consciences in matters of religion would continue as long as the nation.

These thoughts were enough to make them weary of their dwelling, and it was best for these men, in this case, to quit all, and come into a settled, stable government, secured by a succession of kings of the seed of David, to which the promises were made for aftertimes, whom God, afore their own eyes, had prospered hitherto unto wonderment, and to whom the promise was, that he would continue still to do great things for them. It was best for these men to remove into a place where a defence was upon all the glory; yea, and they had this farther encouragement, that they had seen two such kings, father and son, one after the other, so truly godly and zealous of God's true worship, and lovers of their brethren, the godly Israelites; whereof the latter now reigning was holy to an eminency; and farther, they were encouraged to cast themselves upon the brotherly aid and assistance of their brethren of Judah, and Benjamin, &c., and upon the bounty of so holy and large-hearted a prince as this Asa was, and who, through the blessing of God, was newly enriched with so great spoils (unto a consecrated part of which they came to join in the sacrifice, ver. 10), and so was abundantly enabled to provide for them out of this abundance that fell to him, besides the other ordinary ways of doing it; who also had lately won cities to put them into (if need were), especially considering that this king and this people had invited them to come, and gathered them together upon the sermon of a prophet sent from God to that end, to worship God, and proposed unto them to join in a solemn oath and covenant afore God mutually, and also unto God so to do. For, by their access, the kingdom of Judah would be (as it was) greatly strengthened, and grow in reputation and honour thereby. Yea, and finally, God had by that last prophet promised this king, and those of Judah, that their work should be rewarded, ver. 7, and to unite and gather together, and so to support these strangers, their persecuted brethren, in their sufferings, or to help any others who had afore voluntarily come in to them, was one and a great part of that work the promise was made unto, that it should be rewarded. Now, upon all these grounds, these persons had reason to judge that this king and this people were in the highest measure engaged and obliged hereunto. Since, therefore, they were in these circumstances, and were rationally possessed with these and such like apprehensions, it was most eligible for them to leave their dwellings, &c. Though indeed in itself it was a hard and difficult trial, yet when they were so necessitated on the one hand, and their way on the other side was so promising and sweetened, and on both hands rendered the only way to secure and preserve themselves and their posterity, an appeal might be made unto all men to judge if these alone were not simply motives sufficient to render it every way most eligible; yea, and to make them so to rejoice in the good providence of God, that had so wisely and so graciously contrived such a juncture, and opportunity, and season of advantage for them. And indeed their removal is put upon this very thing, as part of the reason of it, in the text: ver. 9, 'They fell to him (viz., Asa) in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God was with him;' so wonderfully with him, as hath been related, so as the outward prosperous condition of him moved them.

Sir Walter Raleigh hath shewn himself as deep-sighted, and apprehensive to spy out of the stories and imperfect narrations of times, what the face or scheme of things in any age was, as any historian whatever that hath undertaken to set forth matters of that nature. And he gives this judgment of that juncture of time during Asa's reign, and puts not only this remark upon it, that it was the eminent sole time of advantage (for he could find no such other during the whole 250 years) for the whole people of Israel to have taken the opportunity to have set themselves free from that idolatry, &c., and to have united themselves to this Asa, king of Judah, their natural prince, and the people of Judah, their brethren; and he spends two whole sections upon the debate thereof, and that chiefly upon politic and prudent considerations. He begins his fifth section thus: In the reign of Asa, the kingdom of Israel felt great and violent commotions, which might have reduced the ten tribes unto their former allegiance unto the house of David, if the wisdom of God had not otherwise determined. And the sixth section begins thus: Any man that shall consider the state of Israel in those times, may justly wonder how it came to pass, either that the whole nation, wearied with the calamities already suffered under these unfortunate princes (from Jeroboam until now), did not return to their ancient kings, and reunite themselves with the mighty tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

And therefore give me leave not to wonder if, at such a season, multitudes of particular godly persons of those three bordering tribes, zealous of the true religion, did thus choose to break from that yoke for a time, when withal this course was presented unto them to be the only probable way of safety, and so invited them thereto; and the opportunity lay so fairly open for it, especially when the enjoyment of the ordinances of God was connected with it, and cast into the bargain to their present security.

3. There was a third going up of these tribes in Hezekiah's time, but five years afore the final ruin of that people as a nation, which was occasioned and drawn in by an invitation of Hezekiah (as that of Asa's had also been), upon which it is said that divers of Asher, and Manasseh, and Zebulon humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxx. 11, when the generality of that people laughed at the message and messengers, ver. 10.

But then, withal, let the case and condition of this people at that juncture of time be considered also, and it will be found the people then had a far greater freedom than any formerly had.

Their condition at that time, in 2 Chron. xxx. (not to insist on that which was before mentioned in the case of that second removal) was this; that there were many cities of the ten tribes that had continued all along subject to the kings of Jerusalem, from Abijah's and Asa's days, even to Hezekiah's, whom Hezekiah could command as well as invite to come (read for this 2 Chron. xiii. 10, and xv. 8); yea, and it would seem that the cities of Manasseh, and others of Ephraim, had upon the commotions and miseries that had fallen out in Israel, given up themselves unto Hezekiah, or formerly, unto some of the kings of Judah; for it is evident Hezekiah had dominion therein, from what is said, 2 Chron. xxxi. 1, that after that passover, the people went and brake down the images in all Judah, in Ephraim also, and Manasseh, which being done by Hezekiah's subjects, and with his authority, these cities also must have been under his dominion.

But that which I principally consider and urge in the case, and which will carry all afore it, and defend it from objection, is this, that God, in his gracious providence, had so disposed of this nick and juncture of time, that all of the ten tribes that would, had liberty to go to Jerusalem to worship by the permission of their king who was over them; which was a mercy and

privilege never afore vouchsafed for almost two hundred and fifty years. Hoshea was then their king (and the last king of their own over them) when Hezekiah sent this invitation to the ten tribes, and the power of their kings had been afore (as appears by 2 Kings xv. 19, 29), and was (as it remained in this king's time) much broken; insomuch that the first nine years of the time from the vacancy of the former king, whereinto this Hoshea succeeded, is reckoned by interpreters as a time of confusion and anarchy of the people. After those nine years, when he is reckoned to have become a settled king, it was by his having been made but as a tributary unto Shalmaneser, king of Assyria (as 2 Kings xvii. 3 expressly tells us), and who, as many think, had set him up king, and by reason of this dependence on a foreign prince, his interest was changed from that of those former kings who had prohibited the going of people to Jerusalem, out of a fear which they had of their making a party among them for the kings of Judah; and hence, as for other reasons, which the circumstances wherein he was led him into, he, of all the other kings, gave this liberty unto the people to worship as they pleased; and this that passage (which the Holy Ghost, as on purpose, hath inserted), 2 Kings xvii. 2, seems to signify and point to us: 'And he did that that was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.' Those latter words, *but not as the kings of Israel that were before him*, do, *notanter*, remarkably give a different character of this king from all the foregoing kings, and that in respect of that sin which had been common and universal to them all afore, and not of some particular personal sins only. Now, what had that been, but that sin which is noted all along to have been Jeroboam's sin first, who was the father of that abomination, and who led the round to all that succeeded, and which sin is heedfully, all along from Jeroboam downward, affixed to them all, that they made Israel to sin, as Jeroboam had, in worshipping the calves at Bethel, and who withal severely prohibited any of their subjects to go up unto Jerusalem to worship; for that was the main intent that the calves were set up for. This was general to them all; whereas heathenish idolatry (which some would have to be the difference) was but the sin of some of them.

Many interpreters, from hence, do plainly collect, and, *in terminis*, in express terms affirm, that this Hoshea did give liberty to this people, his subjects, to go up to Jerusalem to offer there. The true reason whereof was, that the proper interest of those former kings was broken, and he, holding of a foreign prince strong enough to uphold him, scrupled not to quit this so long continued a law, viz., that prohibition about going to Jerusalem; and thus Jewish writers themselves have understood it. Say they, Though Hoshea himself did worship the calves, yet permitted he his subjects that would to go up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, which the rest of the kings of Israel had not permitted; nay, did use to set watchmen and guards at all ways whereby their people should go up to Jerusalem, to stop and hinder them from going to worship.

And there is this further evidence for that, in 2 Chron. xxx. 6, where that serious and solemn invitation of Hezekiah's is made by letters and posts unto the cities of the ten tribes in these words, 'So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria;' where you see the king is twice mentioned, and the first mention doth evidently refer unto Hezekiah and his princes, who were the writers and senders of the letters, together with the posts, and who were at the

charge of it; but the second mention in these words, *and according to the commandment of the king*, do refer (says Deodati) unto the command or permission of the king of Assyria himself to them, who was the supreme over them, and had assented to give them liberty. But, I should say, those words refer rather unto this Hoshea himself, who, though a tributary king under the Assyrian, was yet left to rule them as to their religion, &c., as he should order, or else suppose him a king made by the people, and independent on any other; yet still so it fell out, that to gratify all sorts among the people, he had given allowance by an edict, that they who would should go up to worship; and so it was according to their own king's commandment that this was done, as well as by Hezekiah's invitation and letters. And truly it cannot be rationally thought that the letters, as written in Hezekiah's name, should run in the style of a commandment from him, as sent unto the ten tribes of Israel (whom what follows there doth particularly concern); for they were no way under his command or jurisdiction, but subjects of another king; and therefore I take the whole of it up thus, that Hezekiah, the king of Judah, indeed wrote and sent the letters, the contents whereof are specified, 'saying, Ye children of Israel,' &c. But yet withal there had been an edict of granting freedom by their own king promulged, which is termed his command; and whereas that word *saying*, immediately following the word *commandment*, seems, according to our translation, to carry the contents that follow, as if commanded by that king, we must know that in the Hebrew this word, being in the place of a gerund, may and doth refer to the letters Hezekiah sent, and shews what they contained, and not unto the command; for indeed these words, 'according to the command of the king,' are best read by way of parenthesis, as signifying a coincident matter with the letters, as if he had said that these things were done by Hezekiah, not against, but with an edict of their own king himself concurring, and declaring for leave to his people, which Hezekiah took the advantage of.

Indeed, if this Hoshea, their own king, had not thus far aforehand someway declared this, it may well be thought that the entertainment of them that went with the letters into his dominion would not have been a mockage in word by the common people, but would have ended in blows rather, or in their having been intercepted at least, seeing the people were so highly and generally spirited against them for their message (which their mocking shewed), and for their coming into their kingdom under the jurisdiction of another king, and that boldly to invite them unto what in former times had been accounted treason and rebellion. Certainly, unless king Hoshea had some way promulged and made publicly known so much as might quiet and hold the hands of this people off from violence unto these single persons, the messengers, they would have fallen upon them. But in that they only mocked, and went not about so much as to excuse themselves for their refusal, which excuse had been easy and ready, if so be they had been under the old wonted restraint in this king's days, which had been in force, all this put together would argue that they were indeed really at a liberty to have taken Hezekiah's invitation if they had pleased, but that out of their own innate profaneness of heart they contemned it (having been for a long time disused thereto); which frame of heart (where it was let thus free to their arbitrament) God suffered to forerun and make way for the filling up their own and their forefathers' iniquity in this particular sin, and for justifying that fatal, final captivity that followed upon the whole nation specially; and to this purpose, further, the Lord guided Hezekiah in his letters to write in this manner to them, vers. 7–9, 'And be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who

therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. Now, be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, so that they shall come again into this land; for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.' Wherein he prompted to them that their captivity threatened might hereby be prevented; and not only so, but that their brethren that had already been led captive might yet come to have that compassion from the kings of Assyria, who had led many of them away, and that God would incline their hearts so, as even they also should come again into their own land. So good and gracious is our God, as for the repentance of some part of a nation to be moved to shew mercy unto others of that nation thereupon, which is a very great instance to encourage the people of God in a nation to turn to him, and seek to him for themselves and their brethren.

One thing, by the way, I must here note, that whereas of these present inhabitants (to whom those letters were sent) it is said, ver. 6, 'They were a remnant that had escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria,' this passage is not to be understood as if the present king of Assyria had not been at this time supreme over them, and they and their king Hoshea tributary unto him, as was noted; but it is only to be understood that, by God's goodness, this small remnant had escaped from being carried captives as the rest had been by Pul and Tilgath-pilneser, 1 Chron. v. 26, 2 Kings xv. 29; and that these words, ver. 26, are spoken in relation unto captivity, the comparing of ver. 8 and ver. 9 shews.

There is one appearance more of an argument that they had such a freedom granted them by their king Hoshea, in that the passover having been ended, 2 Chron. xxxi. 1, 'All Israel that was present brake down the images,' &c.; and after all was done, 'Then all the children of Israel returned every man to his own possession, into their own cities.' This being so indigitatively said, *all the children of Israel*, carries this with it, that those of the ten tribes that had come out of all Israel, returned every man to his own city from whence he had come, and where his own possession lay, which, if they had not liberty from their king Hoshea to have come up, such as in former times had not been granted, they could not peaceably have presumed to have done, or to have again enjoyed their possessions; which also that passage in 2 Chron. xxx. 25, confirms: 'And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.' Where we see that the congregation who came out of Israel, are distinguished from the strangers that formerly came out of the land of Israel, and then dwelt in Jerusalem; so as the most of that congregation that had at that present come, returned to their own homes. And yet I cannot but think that God did persuade and guide many of their hearts, either at that passover or some of the next, that for five years followed, to stay at Jerusalem, and so they escaped that lamentable captivity, which, after those years ended, fell upon those fore-mentioned mockers in that nation.

You have seen how many instances the Old Testament holds out, either for forbearance, or a prudent management of enjoying ordinances, or avoiding the case of danger.

Obj. There is no objection of moment in the Old Testament to the con-

trary, that I know of, but that of Daniel, chap. vi. 5, 7, 10, Where 'all the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, having consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of the king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' And this indeed is a great objection, in appearance, for he neither forebore altogether the practice of the duty, nor used any avoidance, or so much as a concealment. For if he would have prayed, he might have prayed secretly, and performed the inward worship of prayer, which God regards, or he might have performed the outward *privately;* as for *time*, he might have done it in the night; as for *place*, he might have done it in another place, in a privater room; he needed not to have opened his windows; but yet we see that he chooseth to use an open and an avowed profession: says the 10th verse, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed,' that is, knew full well the nature of the decree, that it was irreversible; knew his enemies' manner of getting it, and their design in it; knew full well the danger that he should incur, viz., that the instant after he should have done it, death must follow; for he knew the king, though he favoured him, could not pardon him; yet, he never so much as deliberates at all, whether he should, or he should not, but went immediately into his house, and down upon his knees, with his window open, and, as some read it, did every way do as he had wont.

The argument from hence is this, that when the supreme magistrate forbids any part of worship of God, public or private, every Christian is bound, after Daniel's example, to continue to practise it with boldness, openness, yea, in all circumstances as he had wont; there being the like reason of all worship else as there is of prayer.

Ans. 1. This is perfectly contradictory to all the former instances, and in a special manner unto that last: Ezra iv. 23, 24, 'They made them cease by force and power, then ceased the work of building the temple.'

Ans. 2. That this example of Daniel should extend unto all duties of religious worship when prohibited by the magistrate, whatever the case be, cannot be; for neither were all these former instances sinfully acted, nor was Daniel the only valiant man in the Old Testament, whose example should reprove all the rest. The Scriptures, as our Saviour Christ says, cannot be broken, and therefore of necessity there must be found out a reconciliation.

And those that are of that opinion of an absolute obligation in case of such prohibitions in any part of public worship, without any relaxation, ought not to run away with one part, as yet men use to do, but are obliged soberly to seek to reconcile these things, as well as we of this other opinion, and to do otherwise is a great contempt unto Scripture; and this reconciliation is no way done but by finding out the clear ground of the difference from the nature of the duties and the cases. Our Nonconformists, in the case of the oath *ex officio*, in which a man was put upon it to accuse himself in matter of fact, had Christ's instance urged upon them, that Caiaphas the high priest by an oath did adjure him: 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be Christ the Son of God; Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said.' And it was inferred from thence, that therefore every man was bound to answer by oath unto what he should, by the ecclesiastical power, be put upon. The non-consequence of this did easily appear from a contrary practice of our Lord, as that when false witnesses came and

said in the words afore, 'This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days' (which yet in the substance of it, was what he himself had indeed spoken in relation to the temple of his body), yet unto this 'he answers nothing.' Was it that he had an oath put upon him in the one case, which put the difference? No; he might have chosen whether he would have accepted of that oath or no; yet he thought himself bound to answer to the one, but not to the other.

There was, therefore, in this case this ground of difference suggested by those good men between the one case and the other, that the subject matter whereabout he was asked was differing: the one was matter of fact, but the other was matter of confession; a point of absolute necessity to declare himself the Son of God, which was necessary at that time, or else for ever his testimony ceased, for his enemies were resolved to put him to death; it was necessary, especially for the matter of it, it being that great point, both of his concernment and our faith, that he was the Son of God. And the difference of these two doth give a rational ground why he answered to the one and not to the other. The like may be observed when they asked him concerning his doctrine, he refuses to answer, John xviii. 20, because it was matter of fact in what he had preached, of which afterward.

Things that are thus like in all appearance, have yet, in the foundation of them, a vast difference, and so will this case of Daniel's be found to have, from the former instances.

1. There have been some who have denied that it was well done of him, but that he was simple and foolish in it, and needlessly exposed himself to death; for he might have prayed, say they, 1, inwardly, and so have performed his duty, at least; 2, if he would pray with bodily worship, he might have done it privately, or at night, and in another place.

But this opinion is confuted, not only because the Holy Ghost hath recorded this great act of his, and also that it is witnessed unto by so great a deliverance from God, which shewed God's acceptance; and also that Darius, a heathen, did witness upon it to Daniel's integrity, in those words: 'Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee,' ver. 16; but also because Daniel himself, ver. 22, puts it upon this reason: 'Forasmuch as before God innocency was found in me;' and, ver. 23, 'No manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.'

2. Others say it was an heroic, extraordinary act, that is not to be drawn into ordinary example. But we have no warrant to think so, and I shall not have recourse to extraordinaries whereby to difference it from the former instances.

3. It yet must be acknowledged to be a special act in a special case, whereof perhaps, such another instance is not, in all points, to be again found in the Old Testament.

4. I will tell you what the good old Nonconformists' principles were in this case. Their practice is known, that when they were silenced from preaching by the magistrate or bishops, they forbare preaching all their days; and afterwards, when the way of going to New England had been started, some that were but in danger of the High Commission, removed unto New England, and so avoided the storm, as Mr Cotton did, leaving the bulk of his church here, and when this instance of Daniel was urged, Mr Cotton gave this account of it;—

He used to produce that example of Ezra's ceasing the building of the temple, constrained by force, for justification of the Nonconformists' forbearance, and suffering themselves to be silenced and then being silent; so in answer to this place of Daniel, and reconciliation of both, and for the clearing

of either, he put this substantial difference between the one and the other, that Daniel's came under an immediate duty of the first commandment, which was personal prayer unto God, as also under a duty of confession to be made of the true God, in which case there is no room for mercy or preservation of a man's self; but he is called to lay down his life in that case. But that other instance in Ezra and the like, was the forbearance of an outward, instituted worship, and such an one temple worship was, sacrifice and the like, parallel to our ordinances of preaching by ministers, and to our churches, sacraments, &c.; and that of these latter, with difference from the other, Christ's rule holds true, 'I will have mercy rather than sacrifice' (which was the temple worship), sacrifice being the highest instance of instituted worship.

I shall enlarge this notion, and prosecute it farther.

I shall, 1, consider the nature of this fact of Daniel's in the substance of it; and,

2. Insist on the differences of other cases.

3. I shall remove objections that may be made from his retaining of outward circumstances, kneeling openly and toward Jerusalem, as he had wont every day to do.

1. The substance of the act is a complex of many things which, when stated and first considered apart, and then put again together, will afford a clear difference from the case of other outward ordinances. Calvin insists on two things, as I observe out of his comment, as Mr Cotton also hath done.

That the object of the prohibition was that none should pray to God for a month together, and then he further adds that it came under the nature of the case of a confession of God. Now I will not lay all the stress of the whole weight upon each of these apart singly (though each would bear a rational ground of difference from the former instances), but on the whole complexion of all together.

(1.) The object of the edict was that none should pray at all unto God; for it runs thus: 'To establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O King, he shall be cast into the den of lions.' Calvin first makes a great matter of this, that prayer should be thus forbidden,* because that in the worship of God, prayer is the top and the chief worship, and the highest sacrifice of all other; and it is at large urged by him that it is that we owe simply to God in all conditions, a duty whereby we are to witness God to be the author of all good to us, to acknowledge our dependence upon him for all benefits, either to come, which we obtain by prayer, or past and present, and therefore in Daniel's practice here, ver. 10, as he prayed, so he gave thanks before his God. It is by prayer that we offer up our desires and vows unto God, and cast all our cares upon him, which, if we forbear, we shew we can be without God, without his help, his aid; whereas if he withdraw, we perish every moment; and this we are to do every day. Now to make a decree that whatsoever a man's distress be, if he be sick he must not pray, if under lusts, if he were near unto death (as a man might think), he must not pray or call upon his God for a moment together, would be to make an edict against all religion.† And others also urge it unto such a

* Cum in adoratione et cultu Dei primas partes obtineat precatio—ne quisquam oraret erat manifesta et crassa nimis abnegatio pietatis—and again that it being *præcipuum sacrificium*, hence says Calvin, Cum Rex vetaret usque ad totum mensem ullam precationem concipere, hoc erat exigere a singulis ut Deum abnegarent.

† Edictum Darii pugnat cum jure naturæ. Quod enim quemque docet et convincit esse Deum ac proinde colendum.—*Polanus.* Again he says, Infringeret Daniel jus omnibus hominibus innatum. Also, Willet on Daniel, cap. vi. quæst. 16.

purpose as this. We further put it, it was against nature, the law of nature (as the Dutch Annotations say), for the heathen mariners in Jonah's ship, when in danger of death, called every man upon his god.

1. Hence then there is this difference between Daniel's case and that of instituted worship; that in this case of Daniel, prayer in the general universal nature of it was prohibited, not family worship or assembly worship, but all; and prayer thus taken, is immediately natural, and needed no superadded institution, but it is essentially worship; it is *cultus essentialis* and not *medium cultûs*, as to pray in a congregation and the like are; and so it doth differ wholly from instituted prayers in a church, and as put up by one man as the mouth of the rest. Such were temple sacrifices, synagogue prayers, and preaching, which are parallel to ours.

2. Add unto this, that it was not only commanded that thus prayer in the general nature of it, and then simply considered, should be forborne (though that had been an horrible impiety against the immediate law of nature, the highest law of nature that is for the worship of God); but further, this act of Daniel's, in the circumstances he stood in, rose up to be a confession and profession of the true God as God, which he must have renounced if he had forborne; and Calvin makes that a second ground of this act of Daniel's.* Some interpreters put it upon that, though they extend that profession unto too great a latitude, and leave the reader at an uncertainty about it. Calvin† himself makes a distinction of two sorts of profession, excluding the one as not binding us, and in the other he speaks limitedly and uncertainly in saying *quantum necesse est in cultu Dei*, as much as is necessary; he doth not say what is absolutely necessary, but that in the worship of God we should not give any sign of a perverse and perfidious dissembling, as if we cast off godliness, which I would say too.

To explain this head, I shall distinguish thus: confession is taken indeed,

1. Largely, for the manifestation or holding out of any particular practice or duty, point or truth of religion, of any or every command of God whatsoever; for in holding forth of these there is a profession (as we call it) runs along with all these. Now there is no man will say that a man is bound to hold forth every truth he believes, although he is prohibited to speak it. 'Hast thou faith?' (says the apostle) 'have it for thyself,' which is also the thing that Calvin asserts, that as there are many truths which a man may forbear to speak, as not being bound to do so, so many practices in which it is meet to forbear; and yet in all these there is a profession runs along, for in these cases their not professing is not a denying such a truth or practice, but a concealing it, and forbearing to hold it forth at such and such a time, which at other times and in other cases we would do and were bound to do. 'Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time,' Amos, v. 13; and this holding forth of duties, or truths, or practices in this general nature is rather profession than confession: and here there must be found a right joint or rational ground of difference to judge what we be bound to profess and what not, and at what times and seasons.

2. There is confession strictly and properly taken, which is not at large a profession only, but an absolute confession of God, wherein we must deny

* Quod ad professionem spectat necesse fuit, &c.—*Calvin.* Externum jus cultus tum fuit loco confessionis veri Dei.—*Polanus.*

† Duplex est professio; neque enim dico (says he), quicquid sentimus passim vulgandum esse, ita ut statim rapiamur ab hostibus, ad mortem. And secondly, Quantum necesse est; and thereupon he speaks uncertainly, limitedly, Sic nos contineamus in cultu Dei, ut nequod signum perversæ et perfidæ simulationis demus, acsi abjiceremus pietatis studium.

God if we don't affirm him, if we conceal ourselves and our faith. And confession so taken is a transcendent thing, and comes up into the first commandment, and is all one as to avouch God to be a man's God, and to love God or to fear him.

This is called in Scripture confession, with this additament, and a not denying of him, John i. 10. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask John the Baptist, Who art thou? as supposing he might be the Christ, it is said, 'He confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ,' and (says he, ver. 27) 'He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me,' whom afterwards he pointed unto.

This must not be extended to every forbearance of a truth or of an ordinance, though prohibited by a magistrate's command. When therefore the point of absolute confession is urged as absolutely necessary, the question still must be, and consideration must be had, of the nature of the duty, and of the truth, which in such and such cases to forbear or conceal, would be truly, and plainly, and really a declining it.

It is not barely, and hand over head, that every man is bound, by the law of confession, presently to perform any or every practice, or any or every truth that the magistrate shall interdict for the present; for concerning things of such a degree, there may be some other rule from God, who may warrant me to the contrary, as that which hath been instanced in, of mercy and not sacrifice. Our Saviour Christ would not tell the Jews by what authority he did these things; but he made a positive answer, when he came and was put to it, whether he was the Son of God, or no, by Caiaphas, the high priest (and as it is said), by all the assembly: Luke xxii. 70, 'Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto him, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witnesses; for we ourselves have heard it out of his own mouth.' When they asked him of his doctrine, as preached by him, he would not directly answer: John xviii. 19–21, 'The high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogues, and temple, whither the Jews resort: and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I said unto them: behold, they know what I said.' If any honest, godly preacher were questioned, by an adversary that had power, what he had preached at such a time, and should refuse to give in a copy of his sermon, and the like, they would be apt to cry out upon him, and upon others also perhaps who are godly, Are you ashamed of what you have preached? Do you go from your doctrine? which, if you don't confess openly, or forbear to tell it, you do, would they say. Yet, but take it as it had been preached, and then it is matter of fact, and he is not bound to confess it. Our Saviour Christ's example warrants it, referring them unto witnesses; but when they asked our Saviour Christ, whether he was the Son of God or no, and what his faith and conscience in that point was, he answers roundly, and without hesitation, though he knew his life lay upon it; and this is that good confession which he witnessed, that Paul speaks of to Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 13), which, whether it include not also that confession of his to Pilate himself, that he was a king, and that for this end he came into the world, may be a question, for the words will bear either sense, that he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, or under Pontius Pilate as governor.

I come now to the point of Daniel's act of his praying in these circumstances, and in this manner, and to consider it, as it was a point of the highest sort of confession, strictly and properly taken, so that if he had not so confessed, he must have denied God, and if he had forborne, he must have renounced religion.

1. The command (as was said) was to suspend all prayer to any God for a whole month's space, which was to bring in total atheism for so long a time, and to take away all worship that Daniel had left him, or was capable of performing; for there is no worship can be performed without invocation of God. Prayer was by their synecdoche signally all worship; yea, and it was so according to their own principles that procured this law, for themselves worshipped some god or other, which they did under the common notion and acknowledgment of a deity and a godhead; and therefore, to suspend prayer to him for that time, was to make a law that there should be no acknowledgment of God in the world during that time, according to their own principles; and therefore I see most interpreters do state it upon the whole of religion, that forbearance of prayer would have been the abnegation of it, and therefore Daniel, by such a total and visible forbearance (having been accustomed to such a confession), must thereby have given, by a visible withdrawing and concealment, a visible profession that there was no God extant to be worshipped. And his opening of the window towards Jerusalem, in this case, became a visible profession that the God that he worshipped was the God that dwelt at Jerusalem, and had seated himself there between the cherubims formerly, and kept the same place still.

And, 2. In this decree not only God and all his worship is taken away, but a king, and a mortal man, was set directly up in the room of God, and unto the denial of this God, for so the decree runs, not to ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of the king.

This king was exalted above all that was called God, the true God, and all gods else (in opinion such), by this injunction to pray to none other god but unto him. For this was to ordain that during that time he should have all the respect, and homage, and reverence to be brought in to him instead of worship to God; and so, though such petitions put up to the king in the mean time, were but in civil things for the matter of them, and such usually were presented at other times, and so the petitioning was in itself but a civil act, as petitioning to a king is; yet in this case, that all petitions to any god or man must be forborne, and none put up but unto the king, this was interpretatively a worship of that man, because he was addressed unto, in lieu and instead of all addresses, or worshipping of God, and because it was to be to him, with exclusion of God, as thereby acknowledging no other god but him all that while. In this case, therefore, further, for Daniel to have concealed himself, invisibly worshipping the true God, had been a manifest denial of God, and in a visible manner.

These corollaries may be drawn from the former examples.

1. We may admire the good and gracious providence of God, that in the times wherein his wrath was so high and great upon the generality of the ten tribes, during two hundred and fifty-four years, and in the times of such great distresses as these were upon their consciences; he should yet work out a liberty for any of them through a special providence at such several seasons; yea, and the advantage which God did cast into the second, as also the third season of liberty, upon their removals for the ordinances, is very remarkable in the event and success thereof.

1. As for the second company that removed, in Asa's time, they first came to live under the prosperous reign of Asa, who reigned after this their falling in to him many years, and Jehoshaphat, his son, a godly man, succeeded him, and reigned many years; so as these, in the event and success by coming into Judah, enjoyed an age of rest and prosperity, and a fulness of ordinances with it.

Then, 2. They escaped very great miseries, which the ten tribes fell into,

as Benhadad's invasion, and the change of government and governors, Zimri, and Omri, and Tibni (Sir Walter Raleigh reckons seven of their kings in Asa's time); and, besides that, they escaped the heathenish tyranny in Ahab's time, which was the worst time the ten tribes had.

Then for the third company, who removed in Hoshea's time, if it fell out that they removed their stations altogether (as some think they did, because of that, 2 Chron. xxx. 25, where it is said, 'All the strangers that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem'); or if any of these strangers were of those that came up unto the passover, upon Hezekiah's invitation, in the former part of the chapter, and placed their dwellings in Judah, then God in his providence did graciously guide them unto a great preservation of themselves and their posterity; for, five years after, Sennacherib came and carried the generality of the nation away captive; and the escape of this calamity was the good which they got by removing for ordinances, according to Ahijah's prophecy given in Jeroboam's time; and beside that these strangers are twice said to be those that came out of the land of Israel, which argues that they were of the ten tribes.

Further, if you compare the style that is given the former second company that came out in Asa's time, 2 Chron. xv. 9, you will find, that they are said to be the strangers out of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Simeon, so as God owned and highly rewarded this their practice of a removal for the enjoyment of the ordinances of God in a continuance.

2. These things were written for our example, that we thereby might have light to guide us; and all these instances shew, that as for any absolute obligation to instituted ordinances (that fall back, fall edge, we should be bound to them), that assertion (whoever would maintain it) will come to nothing afore these examples.

1. They fall short, and no ways rise up to any such proof, for,

(1.) All these three instances shew that those godly Israelites came up to Jerusalem upon opportunities and advantages afforded them in the providence of God, and not simply upon the absolute obligation unto these ordinances; for you read of no more such coming up in the *interims*, but only these three times, which how they were circumstantiated you have seen.

And (2.) thousands of others out of other tribes, as godly as they, did not remove when these did, and yet are blameless, and this because of the difference of the case, as hath been explained. I will allude to what James says: Go take ye all the prophets of those tribes for an ensample (the enumeration of whom that were during those two hundred and fifty years doth arise to a great number); take also the seven thousand that had not bowed to Baal, and the one hundred prophets hid in the caves; take also Obadiah and his case, who is said to fear the Lord greatly, who, being governor of Ahab's house, could not be supposed to have removed to Jerusalem for ordinances in those times, though no man had more opportunities to get away than he, if he could have removed once for all, for he had the liberty to go through one part of the land by Ahab's appointment, 1 Kings xviii. 6, and at other times could, by the authority he had at court, have taken the liberty to have gone out at any time, but being in a great calling of trust to Ahab, and doing service to the people of God in hiding so many prophets, &c., he forbare. And Elijah that met him reproves him not at all for it, yea, he hath the commendation of the Holy Ghost himself, that he 'feared God greatly.' And

for Elijah himself, the Lord commands him expressly to hide himself, and names a safe place, 1 Kings xvii. 23.

(3.) We read not of any in the *interims* of these three times and seasons that did remove, which is to be put upon this supposition, that the oppressions of the times hindered them, as it did the former, and that there should be but these three times mentioned only, and a silence in all times else for so many years, argues that they ceased in the interims between.

(4.) The rule and measure given at first, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' was the ground of all this, and cuts off any alleged absolute obligation; for if they were bound at all times, and in all cases, then they were not to forbear at any time for mercy's sake, for then there were no room at all for it; the equity of which rule was then extant, as it had been in all ages, and must be to the end of the world; and one of the prophets of these ten tribes of those times did first utter it, Hos. vi. 6, and Jesus Christ applies it unto the breaking of the Sabbath, in case of mercy, by plucking the ears of corn, as also in the case of eating the show-bread, which David did, and then of the priests' toiling as much as men in any calling do, which Christ calls a profaning the Sabbath, and yet says that they are blameless, Mat. xii.

(5.) Nay, the omitting of an instituted ordinance for mercy's sake is far less than the breaking of it, and this is but a forbearance for mercy's sake of which we speak.

Obj. But you will say that mercy to our souls is to be considered, and it is mercy to our souls to enjoy ordinances, and they are to be preferred to all things else.

Ans. 1. I answer, It is true; this will go a great way, and weigh against many difficulties; but yet we are to consider this, that mercy to our souls by ordinances depends upon our edification by them, and what that will prove to be, and that edification depends upon God, as he will make them to be profiting; and so now, if God comes in between and says, I will have mercy, he can make such means as we have (in the want of these other means) edifying to us, when as thus he calls us to shew mercy to ourselves. And he that hath given us this rule out of his mercy and grace, will be sure to perform the other part, of edifying us, when he thus calls us out of the same grace.

Ans. 2. Instituted ordinances, though they have power of obligation over us for our edification, yet not when it is to apparent destruction, as the apostles themselves had power for edification, but not for destruction.

Ans. 3. There is some mercy to be shewed to the magistrate, that we ought not daringly to meet in so open a way as we know beforehand will provoke and irritate them to persecute us.

Ans. 4. The ordinances in the performance of them require quietness and rest, in men's spirits at least. We cannot pray when we are alone without distraction, much less can we worship God when we are rationally under certain fears: Deut. xii. 9–11, 'Ye are not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there: thither shall you bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord.' And they forbare many ordinances in the mean time, as in ver. 8, 'Ye shall not do after all the things

which we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in own eyes,' the equity of which may be drawn from the apostle's example. Paul, though he had an open door, yet, having no rest in his spirit, left Troas. And it will in a great measure hold, that men should not meet in the midst of fears and terrors, when they are full of fears within and terrors without; it being also a dishonour to the ordinance when the assemblies are by force broken up, and the like; therefore men should so meet, both as to time and place, as it is rationally probable that their present meeting may be in some safety through secrecy and privacy. And God did, by his special promise, secure his people under the Old Testament when they went up to appear before the Lord thrice in the year, that no man should desire their land at those times, Exod. xxxiv. 24, which he hath not done to us in the like case.

Obj. 2. But you will say, Yea, but the glory of God is interested in our use of these ordinances.

Ans. I answer, That if God will be so gracious to us as to quit that consideration of his own glory for mercy to ourselves, as we have cause to be thankful to him for it, so to conform ourselves unto this exception which himself hath made.

2. Men yet are to put themselves to much loss, inconvenience, and difficulties, to enioy the ordinances, as this people of the ten tribes did.

1. In the best times it was a weariness to the people of the ten tribes so remote to go up to Jerusalem three times a year, though to the next tribes it was not much labour; and Jeroboam used this as an argument, upon the experience which the people had had, as what he thought would move them the more readily to forbear. 'It is too much for you (says he) to go up to Jerusalem,' 1 Kings xii. 28. It was an argument *ad populum*; he spake to their hearts, and that which was like to take their hearts, and as what had been a burden to carnal spirits among them. And truly do you measure it now, you that have country houses; how do you excuse yourselves from coming up to ordinances! And if you had been put to it so much as they were to travel so far, you would grudge at it much more. It was also grievous to suffer great reproaches, to be made gazing-stocks (which those that went in the first three years of Jeroboam must needs be supposed exposed unto from the generality of the people), and to be accounted next door to traitors in going unto the quarters of a prince whose yoke they had cast off.

But more expressly it is said in that third remove in Hoshea's time, that the messengers and message of invitation by Hezekiah was mocked at, and laughed to scorn by those tribes sent to: 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 11, 'The posts passed from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulon: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless divers of Asher, and Manasseh, and Zebulon, humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.' Of these it must needs be judged that they were mocked and laughed to scorn to purpose as they went out, or went along, and the word *nevertheless* imports that they went, maugre those reproaches, and despised the shame, despisings, and scorns.

Then, 2, the priests, in that first of Jeroboam's times, removed unto their great loss as to their outward estate, for the revenues and perquisites of the temple, which the priests lived much upon, were (as Walter Raleigh says*)

* Sir W. R., p. 452. The poverty of the tribes of Levi must needs have been exceeding great at this time, all their lands and possessions in the ten tribes being utterly lost, and the oblations and other perquisites from those ten tribes by which they lived being now cut off.

very small. And as for the people, those of them that came up and lost their inheritances of lands, must needs suffer much more loss, as hath been argued, and enjoy a mean livelihood in comparison to what they had in their own country. Yet we see in what cases they did remove for ordinances; much, therefore, is to be allowed of loss this way to enjoy the means for our souls, yet so as to look as nature is the foundation of grace and the exercises of it; and if that should fail, the exercises of religion would fail also, as we see in sickness, &c.; so it is here, that there must be a subsistence laid as a foundation for the enjoyment of ordinances, which, when there is, though it be with much loss and abatement, we are to rejoice in that as in a great portion: Isa. xxx. 20, 'The people shall dwell at Zion in Jerusalem.' To dwell in Zion at Jerusalem is to enjoy the ordinances at Jerusalem; for Zion was the seat of them, and unto such it is said, ver. 20, 'Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed.' Bread and cheese, and the gospel, was said (in time of old) to be good fare.

3. The consideration of the circumstances these stood in, both those that went up to Jerusalem, and those that forbore, may instruct us, and give us light into our duty and practice.

(1.) It instructs us what proportion of mercy to our outward condition is to be weighed with ordinances, upon which we are to forbear, or not to forbear.

(2.) It directs us that, upon the rational foresight of the same or like extremities, we should know how to guide ourselves in our adventures to enjoy ordinances where the like hazards are run, and the like vigilances to hinder them are used, and soberly and conscientiously to consider of every opportunity we adventure to take, how probably secure it is, and not rashly, hand over head, rush upon and adventure upon all or any dangers, come what will.

4. As for the case of the removal altogether to enjoy them elsewhere, if it be said that this we ought to do as they did, go take the same state and circumstances, and so it ought to be, I answer,

(1.) When it is to the ruin of families we are not obliged, as these were not, that could not remove themselves and families without ruin.

(2.) Parallel, put our case with theirs in those times, and it will appear far different, as will appear especially in the second instance, when many of them removed for altogether: 1, They removed out of a land over which the wrath of God hung, and was denounced against it, unto a land where they saw that God was with them, and that is made one ground of their remove, 2 Chron. xv. 9; 2, they removed to strengthen the cause of God, which needed them in the land they removed to; and, 3, they were invited by a potent and able prince and his people, who thereby were obliged to provide for them; 4, there was a final captivity threatened in the end, by God, unto that land from which they removed. And, in this case, for men to remove for ordinances, was as if protestant borderers upon any popish country where the inquisition reigns, which country they also knew was designed to ruin, should remove, being invited unto a neighbouring nation where the cause of God is, and all the advantages mentioned. But to remove,

1, From a nation where there is a bulk and body of saints that need the strengthening of their brethren, which is made one argument in the case of them that went in Jeroboam's time, that they strengthened Rehoboam;—

2, Where there is hope of a resurrection of a good cause, which was no way their case, but the contrary;—

And, 3, to remove from ordinances to a place where the wrath of God is more impendent, or at least, no less;—

And, 4, where they can promise themselves no provision for their families, but must put themselves out of their calling and serve God with distraction, and are like to starve with their families; in that case they are not obliged to a remove elsewhere, merely for the ordinances' sake, but to a forbearance rather, and waiting upon God.

I shall now give instances out of the New Testament; and here, first, let the prudence which our Saviour Christ used in case of appearance of danger be considered.

Before I give you the particular instances, I premise these few things.

1. Our Lord was wholly free of any the least tincture of sinful fears, therefore what he did is to be resolved into prudence, applying itself to the providence of God; and he, being God as well as man, could have preserved himself until his hour came, without any hidings or withdrawings, therefore his example herein must needs be for our instruction, to guide us in the like cases.

2. When his hour to suffer was come, as himself speaks (which had been by a set compact and agreement between the Father and him, made known to the Son; for, John xviii. 4, it is said, he knew all things he should suffer, and elsewhere, that so it was appointed), then he avoided not.

These things premised, I come unto the particular instances of his avoiding danger, and the occasions of them, which we shall find to have been but prudential fore-seeings and warinesses to preserve himself till indeed the hour appointed by his Father, and consented to by himself, should come: 'Go tell that fox,' said he, 'I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.' But before that time he was managed by the ordinary providence of God, as to what would befall him, and accordingly applied himself thereto. And hence he becomes an example unto us in two things.

1. How we are to manage ourselves under the ordinary providence of God, which we are always under, not knowing what will be the event of things.

But, 2, when we are called to suffer, then we should, after his example, not withdraw, as in case we are necessitated to suffer by providence, we should then arm ourselves with the same mind as he did.

Obj. An objection is and hath been made by some, that the reason of his avoiding was, that he was to go and preach over all the cities of Judah, and therefore it was all one to him when and whither he did withdraw, since he still was not out of his way, which is not the case of ordinary ministers, that are bound to a certain place.

Ans. 1. The answer is, 1, that be it so, that whither ever he went he still had an employment to wait upon him; yet still it is evident that the cause of his remove from that place where he was afore, was matter of prudence and avoidance, and that instances will shew; and therefore that remains still as an example for us.

Ans. 2. Ministers who are by the like providences (as Christ was) taken off, may wait, that in some other places unto which they may remove, they may have such employments as the providence of God shall call them to for the exercise of their ministry; as the disciples that were scattered by persecution in Acts viii. went up and down preaching, chap. xi.

Ans. 3. That was not the ground why Christ did remove, who had not yet gone over the cities of Judah; for we read it expressly said, that he went again to the same place that he was at afore.

1. The first instance that we have of Christ's avoiding danger is in Mat. iv. 12, 13, 'Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he

departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he came and and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali.' That Galilee that he went into was not that part of Galilee which Herod had, who was of a persecuting nature, but which Philip had (as Grotius* out of Josephus shews); and the occasion of his avoiding was but only when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, namely, by Herod; and so it was time for him to look to himself, and thereupon he secured himself. It was but upon hearing that John was cast into prison, no more; only rationally thinking his turn might be next.

2. In like manner we have an account, John iv. 1–3, 'When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.' Here again, though Christ knew only that the pharisees had heard (which is remote enough from this) that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; and although he had a plea for himself that he baptized none, yet upon this occasion he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. It was that he knew that such a report of him would contract an envy upon himself, and an odium from the pharisees; and so he avoided it, and breaks off, when he was in the midst of an employment, with as much success as any he had at any time elsewhere, afore or after.

3. We have another instance: Mat. xii. 14, 15, 'Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him: but when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence,' &c.

4. There is another instance: Luke iv. 29–31, 'And they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them, went his way; and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee,' &c.; and not only went his way for the present, but removed to another place.

5. We have another instance: John viii. 59, 'Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.'

6. There is another instance: John x. 39, 40, 'They sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.'

2. We have also instances of the apostles,

1. Who after Christ's death until his ascension met secretly, with the doors shut, and in the night: John xx. 19, 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith, Peace be unto you.' And again a second time, after eight days, ver. 26, the doors being shut: 'And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.'

2. After Christ's ascension, the church by flying avoided persecution: Acts viii. 1, 'And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judah, except the apostles.' And although the apostles stayed, because they were extraordinary officers, and had not a commission yet from God to depart from Jerusalem, which afterwards they had, yet the church was so lessened by the disciples scattering abroad (for which the disciples had warrant by reason of persecution), that the apostles might safelier stay.

* Grotius *in locum.*

And we read that for praying and preaching in the like cases they met in the night, and by parts: Acts xii. 12, 'And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying;' James and others of the brethren being in another place, ver. 17.

CHAPTER IX.

Two cases resolved: whether a person, who is not a church member, may be the subject of baptism; whether a minister, who is not a pastor, may administer baptism.

I resolve the cases propounded into these two questions:

1. Whether one that is not a church member may be the subject of baptism?

2. Whether one that is not a pastor, in a particular relation to persons that offer themselves to be baptized, may baptize them? And if he administers it, under what consideration he doth it, whether as a minister, or otherwise as a private person?

Quest. 1. Unto the first question I say these two things:

1. The examples in Scripture do clearly hold forth that persons that were not in church fellowship were yet baptized.

1. The first instance is of the eunuch baptized by Philip, Acts viii. If it be said that he was a proselyte, and so of the Jewish church, and upon that ground a subject capable of baptism, the reply is, that his being of the Jewish church did not make him capable of the gospel baptism, of the ordinance under the gospel which we call baptism.

1. For when John Baptist baptized, he bid them 'say not, they had Abraham for their father,' which yet was a ground for circumcision as under the old covenant administered; but he requires repentance and regeneration, which is the gospel initiation into the kingdom of heaven.

2. Again, Peter, Acts ii., being to baptize Jews, baptizeth them, not upon the account they were the seed of Abraham, but upon faith and repentance, which he calls them to. He only tells them that if they would turn to God, then God would renew the promises unto them and their children, yet in a gospel way, namely, by virtue of their being called, as the 39th verse hath it. So as the ground upon which men were members of the Jewish church, and circumcised, was not the ground upon which they were baptized; and therefore the eunuch was not baptized upon any such account. The dispensation of the covenant was altered, and the application of the ordinances had accordingly an alteration. So then if he were not baptized as a member of the Jewish church, and when he was baptized was a member of no gospel church instituted, then it necessarily follows that a person who is not a member of an instituted church, or a particular congregation, may be the subject of baptism.

2. The second instance (which also is an answer to the former objection) is of the jailor and his household, and of those baptized by Paul, 1 Cor. i. 14. They, to be sure, were not of the Jewish church; for the jailor was a perfect heathen before, to the instant of his conversion, yet he and his household were baptized before morning.

If it be said that Philip and the apostles were persons extraordinary; I answer, that still the extraordinaries of their office did only enable them with an extraordinary power over all churches, and over all persons with an ex-

traordinary authority, but could not convey a requisite qualification unto an ordinary person, which was still required, however, in the subject that was to be baptized. They could not administer the Lord's supper out of a church, nor never did; and although they had extraordinary power over all churches, yet that did not make all churches one church, but there remained churches distinct according to that ordinary capacity of them as Christ had instituted. And so it must be supposed in this case,

2. The apparent difference that is between baptism and the Lord's supper in their several intentions, doth shew that the one is properly the ordinance of a particular church, and the other of the universal.

1. Because baptism is a baptizing of a single person into Christ, and consequently into the body of Christ, as 1 Cor. xii. 13 imports, and is but an act of a single person unto a single person (as the instance of Philip and the eunuch being alone shews); and it belonging not unto a particular church, as the former instances declared, it must necessarily belong unto the universal church, as Ephes. iv. 4 seems to hold forth, 'One Lord, one God, one baptism, one body.'

2. As for the Lord's supper, it is as evident that it was properly the ordinance of a particular church embodied together: 1 Cor. x., 'The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' It is the bread which we break, so that there must be a number of persons to celebrate it. For these we must be many, for, says he, 'We being many are one bread, and one body,' ver. 17. It doth not hold forth the union of single persons with Christ, or any engrafting into him, as baptism doth in the first initiation, but it holds forth a joint and a common participation. It is the nature of the ordinance itself, for the institution is, 'Eat ye all of this, and drink ye all of this.' Insomuch as the apostle says, 'Tarry one for another,' 1 Cor. xi. 33. Insomuch also, as it had the denomination from the meeting or gathering together of many, and therefore was called Σύναξις. Therefore, to come together into one place, and to eat the Lord's supper, are put, as it were, mutually one for the other.

Quest. 2. I come now to consider the second question, whether the child of a person truly godly, not in fellowship with you, may be baptized by one who is not a pastor, and under what notion, whether as a minister or no?

1. I suppose that infant baptism, of parents godly, is warrantably in itself required.

2. I suppose that the judgment, whether the person is godly, yea or no, whose child is baptized, properly belongs to him who baptizes it. There is this difference between baptism and the administration of the Lord's supper, that it is a single act of him that baptizeth to the person baptized; but the act of blessing the bread and wine,—'which we bless,'—it is a joint act together with the church, and the minister doth give it to the whole as Christ did. And therefore the judgment of the church, that a man is godly, may satisfy the minister's conscience for his administering the Lord's supper among them, he not applying it to this or that person; but in the point of baptism it is otherwise, as is clear.

3. If it be (as by reviewing the first question it appears) the right of men out of church fellowship, as well as in church fellowship, to be baptized, this must be done by somebody, and the judgment that is to be passed concerning the person, is not incumbent upon a whole church only or chiefly, but upon the single person that is to baptize. So as for a warrant of his judging such a person to be godly, and the child to be godly, it is not absolutely necessary that he have the judgment of a church for it. And if there were not a lawful way or means by which, after the apostles' times, those

out of church fellowship, which were converted, might be baptized, then Jesus Christ had not made provision for all times of the gospel as well as for the first, in so great an ordinance. If, therefore, it does lie upon some, those must either be ministers or others; if it lies upon others, you know the inconveniency that will follow upon that; if it lies on the minister, the question is, whether as a minister or no? To that I shall give this clear answer, That a man that is set apart by his own vow to God, professed by his acceptance of that calling, when he was called to be a minister in a church (and it hath the nature of a vow on his part, and is so accepted of him by God), by virtue of that public consecration and dedication of himself unto the service of Christ as a minister, he is to be looked upon as a minister, not only unto them of his own church, but occasionally also as he shall be called to such an act of the ministry as he singly may perform, as to preach or to baptize, which, when he does, he does it as a minister, and with the blessing of a minister, and with the promise made to a minister. If one come to him with a case of conscience, as to a minister of Christ, he hath the blessing of a minister, and the promise of a minister, and the guidance of a minister to resolve it; and by like reason, if any one come to him and call him to baptize, he hath authority to do it. And this does no way prejudice our congregational principles; for it is a single act of the ministry, and but occasionally put forth, as he shall be called thereto. But the matter of ordination, and of governing the church or ruling, it is not a single act, but is to be performed with others, for it is an act of authority or power over others, but it is not an act of power above others, or which others have not. Our presbyterian brethren fail in their practice and in their argument, in that they, because they are ministers, therefore associate themselves together, and take power over the churches, to rule them and govern them, whether the churches do call them or no. And call them to it as churches they cannot, unless they give away thereby and prejudice that power which is seated within themselves, as in a body, and ought to be exercised among themselves, and not without themselves in a judicature that is without them. If I were seated in a parish that had a church in it, gathered out of it, and the rest of the parish came to hear me, I should not look upon myself to preach as a private man to all these that are not in my church, and as a minister only to them that are of the church, but as one set apart to the work of the ministry; to preach as a minister to both, as to the matter of preaching; and that (as I take it) by virtue of what is said, Ephes. iv. 12, 'He gave pastors and teachers as well, *πρός τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων*, for the jointing in of the saints,' which is conversion, as well as for the edifying of the body of Christ.

CHAPTER X.

Whether a church may depose an officer for a crime which deserves not excommunication.

That a church may not disclaim an officer for an offence which is not worthy of excommunication, appears to me evident from this reason, because you are to exercise the same patience towards an officer, as an officer, in matter of crime, that you are to use to a private member; and so you are not to disclaim him from being an officer on a lesser account than you would excommunicate him; according to that rule (which nature dictates) to entreat an elder as a father (and this in case of censure). This is a main duty

of a church to a minister, and by a rule of equity grounded on nature, in the duty of children to a father, not to renounce him for that fault for which they would not renounce a brother.

Obj. All this runs upon a false supposition, viz. that an officer may not be displaced for a crime cleaving to the administration of his office.

1. Because what crime may be cured by a lesser censure, needs not a greater; but crimes that cleave to the administration of an office, may be cured by the displacing of the officer, which is a lesser censure; therefore there is no need of excommunication, which is a greater.

2. As an officer cannot be chosen out of the body, being guilty of some crimes, so the same crimes may be just matter of his displacing after his being chosen.

Ans. The objection seems to intimate a distinction between sins cleaving to the administration of his office, and such as are otherwise common to him as a brother, and that for such he may be disclaimed as an officer, when he could not have been so as a brother.

But, 1, I do not see that the Scripture putteth any such distinction between these two sorts of sins, that for the one an officer should be displaced, when not for the other. I am sure that other sins than such as cleave to the administration of his office, are promiscuously put together with the other, and alike forbidden in him:* 1 Tim. iii. 2, 'A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.' And so Titus ii. 2, 'That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.' So as the case of any such crimes is all one with those cleaving to the administration of his office.

2. This your distinction doth run upon a false supposition; as if the subject to be considered in your treating with an officer in matter of crime were not the person, and that as he is a saint and brother, as well in sins of his office as in other sins; for though he is invested with a relation of office (by virtue of his gifts and your choice), yet the discharge of his office faithfully is from his grace; and the neglect of it (for which in such a case you would disclaim him) is but a fruit of his sin from contrary corruption, and a failing as he is a saint, so as in matter of sin you cannot distinguish his being a saint and his being an officer. Surely it is in this as in other relations: a brother being a husband as well as a brother, a brother being a master as well as a brother, and he being an officer as well as a brother, all these relations do oblige them to several duties, which, if they fail to discharge, you are to deal with them all as saints failing in duty, seeing they are defects of grace; and you have not in church-fellowship one way of dealing with a husband if he sins against his relations, another with a master of a family if against his, and so neither a peculiar one for an officer if he sin against his. All the duties of the dispensation and of his office are but the duties of his particular calling and relation, wherein, if he fail (through corruption) he is to be dealt with as another brother who fails in his relation, or neglects the duties of his calling, and no other than the same officer should be if he sins in any other state. And though it be a sin against the church more immediately, yet it being but a sin, God's ordinance is to have it reclaimed the same way that all sins are, Mat. xviii. 15–17. You cannot shew a warrant that God hath given this peculiar power in this case over an officer, to disclaim him as an officer, in way of an ordinance, till he grow so hardened as he deserves excommunication.

* Ubi Scriptura non distinguit, ibi nec nos distinguere debemus.

Your first reason for it is, because such crimes may be cured by this as a lesser censure, and so needs not a greater.

In this your reason, if you view the expression, you will find that you again speak upon a false supposition, as if we had affirmed that crimes in the dispensation of his office did always need the excommunication of the officer. But our exception lies in this, that when his crime needed not excommunication in your own judgment, but you thought that to be too great a censure, you should disclaim him as an officer, whenas on an officer there is no such censure to be inflicted for matter of crime in his office until it comes to that height as it deserves excommunication; and that therefore it was violence in you to be so hasty to proceed so severely till he had deserved it.

1. It is true that simply disclaiming an officer (if for insufficiency) is less than excommunication; but then it is not a censure, for that respects crime; but to disclaim an officer in case of crime and sin is interpretative as much as excommunication; for if dispensed according to the word, it should not be done till he were past cure, and so should be joined, or rather included, in excommunication.

2. The fault we find lies in this, that you make this invention of disclaiming an officer a church censure, and so an ordinance of God coming between admonition and excommunication to cure a man, which we affirm you have no warrant for; so that though it be a less punishment than excommunication (if he had deserved it) would be, that being a delivering up to Satan, yet you must take on you to invent other punishments, as you are a church, than God hath ordained. You have your power, your honour, your lives from Christ, and your punishment (as 2 Cor. ii. 6, excommunication is called) from him also. In a college, you might invent twenty less punishments than expulsion, but in a church, you must invent none that God hath not ordained. And you have not the power that men's courts have of varying their punishments, who, having law to warrant them, use less violence under that consideration than you who have neither God's law nor man's to justify your proceeding herein. And whereas you think, because it is a less punishment, it may cure him, and so he should not need excommunication, I answer,

1. That which must cure must have God's blessing and promise of blessing annexed, and so be his institution; but that this is such we desire a warrant. It may cure him as a cross (as an injustice done in a civil court may, and an unlawful suspension may do the man much good), but that is an accident, and no warrant for you to inflict it.

Yea, 2, what is it in him you would cure? Would you cure him as an officer, or cure him as a saint and brother? If as an officer (as would seem by inflicting punishment answerable to his sin, he sinning in his office you would punish him in his office to cure him), how improper a remedy is this for his cure, which casts him off, destroys him as an officer, lames him for use and exercise of his office, puts him out of it for ever! Doth that surgeon cure a hand, that in going about to make it sound, makes it as a hand for ever unuseful, though he leaves it a member still? Doth any man punish his members so for failing in their office? Will they cut off till there be no hope? Would you cure him as a saint or brother? Then you must forego that distinction of punishing him as an officer for crimes in his office, when not as a brother, seeing he is considered by you as a brother in the time of his office.

And therefore you are to proceed with him for sins in his office as with a brother, if he have committed sins, and use the same means for his cure

that you would do to a brother for his sins; you must use admonition and patience, till his sin comes to that height that it deserves casting off as a brother by excommunicating of him; yea, you ought to treat him with more patience in this kind than you would do a brother, for he is more; entreat him as a father.

Reason 2. Your second reason, drawn from the instance of Abiathar, who remained a member of the Jewish church when put from his priesthood, the only warrant from Scripture you allege, how remote is it from the case in hand!

For, 1, it was not an act of ecclesiastical, but civil power. The text says, Solomon thrust out Abiathar from the priesthood; it was the king did it, 1 Kings ii. 27.

And, 2, not for a sin in the dispensation of his office, but for high treason. So it serves not your purpose at all.

3. For which treason he was 'a man of death,' ver. 26; and that he remained alive, and so in their Jewish church, was from the king's pardon; 'I will not at this time put thee to death,' ver. 26. He only thrust him from the priesthood, which he forfeited in forfeiting his life, and so was part of the punishment included in that other death.

Yea, 4, it was done to fulfil a particular word of prophecy, and no way as a standing ordinance to cure him; so ver. 27, 'That he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli.'

And, 5, in respect to his office, Solomon was so far from heightening his punishment more than to another brother, that he therefore spared his life, 'because he had borne the ark of the Lord,' whereas he put Adonijah and Joab to death, being in the same treason with him.

Obj. 2. As an officer cannot be chosen out of the body, being guilty of some crimes, so the same crimes may be just matter of displacing after his choosing.

Ans. 1. If you have those crimes mentioned, 1 Tim. iii., in your eye, take them but as eminent infirmities, that stand with sincerity, as there the apostle speaks of them, yet if eminent, such an one (if other supply may be had) is not to be chosen; yet consider,

1. That those sins and infirmities there mentioned are not only such as are found in the dispensation of his office, but others also, as was said afore. So that you must say, that not only for sins cleaving to his administration, but of any other kind, he is to be disclaimed.

And, 2, those infirmities are mentioned as rules for the choice of officers, not of casting out one chosen, as also to shew what an one a bishop ought to be after choice: so, ver. 1, 'If a man desires the office of a bishop,' and so is to be chosen, 'let him be blameless,' and it respects choice. So of a deacon, ver. 10, 'Let him first be proved, then let him use the office of a deacon.' The rule, therefore, respects choice: chap. v. 9, 'Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years,' &c.; still those rules were intended to direct choice. But if, after choice, these as infirmities were found in them, he says not they are to be cast out unless obstinate, and so it proves more than infirmity; so as those places will no way afford a ground for this.

And for your inference thence, that if he may not be chosen, being guilty of such crimes as are there mentioned, that therefore, after choice, when guilty, they are just matter to cast him out.

The answer, is, 1, we grant it, if obstinacy be joined to them, and so he deserve excommunication; but simply, the guilt of them as infirmities (and

they are no more till obstinacy and impenitency be added to them), is not just matter to cast out after choice and ordination.

2. If you mean otherwise, that the sole guilt of them should require it, there is not the same reason for not choosing at first and disclaiming afterwards; there is a vast difference to be put.

For, 1, in and before choice there is an arbitrariness and freedom, and no obligation to choose this or that man; but after he is chosen and ordained, there is an obligation by a solemn covenant, the covenant of God; and by ordination, the separation of him unto the service of Christ in that church. Hence, therefore, because their choice is an act, wherein they are free, and wherein they give so great a testimony to the man, to be qualified according to the apostle's rules, they become partakers of his sins, if they choose him with those infirmities, and so ought not to choose him, because it is a sin.

But when he is once chosen, and so great a covenant passed, and so great an ordinance as separation passed upon him, then those his infirmities, though sins in him, are not approved of by you, though you disclaim him not; if you use the means God hath appointed for the cure of him, which is admonition with patience, yea, and by virtue of your covenant, you are to bear with them, if they be but infirmities, though in the administration of his office, because that covenant cannot be so arbitrarily broken as it was made, as your rule would make it, but binds, as all other covenants do, till some other rule warrants a disclaim. The same rule for choosing and disclaiming is not commensurable each to other.

Which, 2, appears in this, that not only those crimes here mentioned, but some circumstances also, though no crimes, are given as rules to divert from a choice, which yet, by reason of the covenant passed, ought not to procure a disclaiming after choice. For, ver. 6, he is not be one newly come to the faith, though never so well gifted (for that he supposeth, and so in those days it sometimes fell out, through the effusion of the Holy Ghost at first), lest he fall into pride; but if chosen once, should that have put him out? Or if he is one against whom after he was chosen, those without had raised ill reports, should this necessitate a disclaiming, because this, if it had fallen out afore, should have diverted his choice? ver. 7.

3. See this in other covenants that pass. Marriage is a covenant of God, which, until made, many infirmities, and circumstances, &c., may and ought to divert one from choosing such or such a person, which after cannot be a warrant for a divorce, for it is the covenant of God. You must divorce in no case, but such as God in his word gives power and warrant for.

4. See it in another instance more near the case. A private Christian that seeks admission, being found guilty of any crime, without repentance, the rule for his admission is, that he must testify repentance, and so satisfy the church of the truth of his grace and repentance of those sins. But if he be once admitted, and in covenant with you, you ought not presently to disclaim him as a brother till he doth repent, but to admonish him as a brother, 2 Thes. iii. 15, and with patience bear with him, using not only one admonition, but a second also, ere you reject him, Titus iii. 10; and this in case of heresy, the most dangerous of sins to church fellowship, and not indeed to reject till it comes to obstinacy, because now he is in covenant with you. Now the proportion as strongly holds between the choice of an officer, and his casting out as a officer; and the admission of a brother, and his casting out as a brother; the covenant that binds to the officer being as strong as that which binds unto a brother.

5. Upon commission of such crimes, he is made uncapable for the present of choice, until repentance, but not so for the same sins after choice, unless

you would make him fall in his office, *ipso facto*, and make him uncapable of admonition, &c. Therefore there is no way *par ratio*, before and after choosing.

Again, 6, if a man had been guilty of such crimes, yet if he had repented, he might be chosen; then, especially after choice, if he be guilty of them, upon repentance he might be continued in his place; why otherwise would you have received him in again? And for his repentance, why should not all the same means and patience be first used, as is used for a brother's, and so not a casting off, as there is not the casting off a brother?

Yea, 7, if an officer should be thus disclaimed, he would not be under all those ordinances that a brother as a brother is under, but in a worse case far; for towards a brother, Christ hath appointed admonition upon admonition with patience, till such obstinacy be added, as it justly calls for excommunication, which, as it were, they unwillingly pronounce upon him, as means to reclaim him ere he be renounced as a brother; and should it not be thus to an officer? An officer is capable of sin in his office as well as a brother; for he that is most spiritual may be tempted, Gal. vi. 1, 2, and so is capable of reproof in his office: Col. iv. 17, 'Say to Archippus, Fulfil thy ministry;' and also of public rebuke for sins proved by two or three witnesses that are public, 1 Tim. v. 19, 20. For, as appears by the coherence, those rules concern elders, yet so as in these proceedings they are to exercise not only the same, but more respect and patience than to a brother.

For, ver. 1, they are gentle unto him as a father; and, ver. 19, they are so far from censuring him hastily, that they are not to receive an accusation, or listen to it, but upon the testimony of two or three approved ones; surely then, the case is evident, they are, as ver. 20, to rebuke them openly, but no more. Till it comes to excommunication, you find not a tittle for disclaiming.

Obj. That less admonition ripens an officer's sin sooner than a brother's, for displacing him as an officer.

Ans. 1. The rules by which you must judge of the ripeness of his sin, must be in the word; now, shew that the limits of proceeding against an officer are more strict than against a brother.

2. It is true, his sin is aggravated more, but still not ripe for rejection, until such impenitency and obstinacy be added to it as would procure excommunication.

Last of all, we add this, that if he were obstinate and impenitent in his sin, and deserved excommunication, yet it doth not appear that thereby he fell from all future right to his office, so as that you are free instantly to send for another. From the Scripture we have not learned that the relation is utterly broken and made void, as that of a brother is not by excommunication; but if upon that ordinance he repented, as you are bound to receive him as a brother, so as your officer again, for you cannot shew a ground that the one relation should be more evacuated than the other. Excommunication is not a casting off but in order to repentance, which restores him *ad pristinum statum*, to his former state.

CHAPTER XI.

Of anointing with oil.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the

prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.—James V. 14, 15.

The anointing spoken of in this text, is not the anointing spoken of, Mark vi. 13, by which the apostles healed those that were sick through a miraculous gift; but it is a standing ordinance to confirm the promise of healing unto church members, as will appear from the following arguments.

1. The first argument is taken from what anointing with oil is here joined with, viz., the elders' prayers, which are a standing ordinance to this purpose, even for the cure of the sick.

2. All the precepts besides in this epistle, are about things which concern the church for ever. And that which this anointing is joined with, namely, the prayer of the elders, is such also; it were strange, therefore, if this alone should be extraordinary.

The second argument may be taken from the persons that are to be sent for, who have the power to administer it, namely, the elders of the church.

1. It is not said, send for men who have healing gifts, but for elders.

2. Who were standing officers, and that of a church, which was to continue.

3. The elders in every church had not then such miraculous healing gifts.

4. The gifts of healing, and those of prophecy, by wisdom and knowledge, which enable men for eldership, were in those times variously dispensed; and not both to the same persons, excepting extraordinary officers, as apostles and evangelists, but to one was given the gift of healing, to others a word of wisdom and knowledge, that enabled them to be elders, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 11.

The third argument is drawn from the persons to whom it was to be administered.

1. They were sick persons, or infirm. If it had been extraordinary healing, it would have extended further, even to the blind, the deaf, and the dumb; but this healing reacheth only to those who were sick of diseases curable, it being no miraculous ordinance. 2. They were members of the church, not unbelievers; for the expression is, 'If any be sick *among you*:' and therefore the elders of that church are to be sent for.

Now miraculous healing did,

1. Extend to all sorts, unbelievers as well as believers.

Yea, 2, to them chiefly, as all miracles did, as, 1 Cor. xiv. 22, it is said of tongues.

Therefore, 3, the apostles themselves, who had gifts of healing, seldom wrought any cure upon believers that were sick: so Paul did not heal Epaphroditus, Philem. 1, 2.

The fourth argument may be taken from the generality of the extent of this ordinance, even to all persons in a church. 'If any among you be sick,' which argues it not to be extraordinary; for when any was healed by an extraordinary gift, it was by a faith of miracles concurring, which was never general to heal any, or all, but particular, reaching only to such a person as God would heal, and who was presented, and his faith stirred up. There was no universal rule given for extraordinary healings.

The fifth argument is taken from the means commanded upon all such occasions, which generally is oil. Now, the extraordinary gift of healing was not confined to oil, but might be applied without means. It had been enough to have said, 'Rise and walk.' So likewise some were extraordinarily healed by other means, as napkins, the apostles' shadow, &c.

6. Another argument may be taken from the generality of the command, which enjoins every one that is sick to send and seek out for this cure. Now, if extraordinary gifts were meant, then in those times men should not have died; for extraordinary gifts of healing failed not to effect the cure where there was a warrant to apply them, as here there is unto any. Every one is to send, and they are to come and anoint every one.

It is therefore intended as an ordinance to confirm the promise of health unto church members, for the words of the text are, 'They shall be healed.' And because his promise to dispense this outward mercy is not absolute, but indefinite, therefore the seal is to be taken as such also. For this seal is to confirm faith, and faith is to be answerable to the promise, and the seal to both. And yet it is of use; for though this seal assures not the party unto whom it is applied, that he shall be healed, yet it gives a more certain evidence of God's seriousness and faithful care over the bodies of his saints, to preserve them in sickness, than to confer on them any other outward mercy: their bodies being most dear to him, next their souls, and their lives precious in his sight, and it being one of his attributes to be the God that heals them, he therefore hath shewn and confirmed that this is so by a seal annexed to the promise of healing, when he hath annexed a seal to no other outward mercy: so that it seals up to our faith the certainty and faithfulness of that promise itself in its indefiniteness, though not of the infallible fulfilling it unto this or that party, yet so as to raise the heart of every one.

Obj. 1. This is to make more sacraments than two.

Ans. There are no more than two seals of the covenant of grace; but for other ends, and to seal other promises, there may be more. As that of the rainbow is in force unto this day to confirm the not destroying the world by water.

Obj. 2. But this seal is for remission of sins, as it was then used; for it follows in the text, 'If they have committed sins, they shall be forgiven:' and so there was an extraordinary healing, at which their souls were often converted.

Ans. The remission of sins there spoken of is not that general and eternal forgiveness of all sins promised in the covenant of grace; nor is this the sacrament of such a remission, but of the remission and taking off of that temporary guilt which might be in any particular sins committed by the persons provoking God to lay that sickness upon them; which is evident from the apostle's speaking hypothetically, 'If he have committed sins,' which argues it not meant of the general forgiveness; for then there were no *if* to come in, it being certain that all sick persons whatever have in that sense sinned. 'All have sinned;' and 'he that says he hath no sin, deceiveth himself.' The meaning therefore is, that if there be any special sin, the temporal guilt whereof hath in a particular manner provoked God to lay this sickness on him, it shall be remitted. And so forgiveness here is but the removal of that guilt considered as in order to this punishment. And thus it is taken: Ps. lxxviii. 38, 'He forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not.' And so, that it should be a seal of such forgiveness, and of the promise of being restored, is but to be a seal of an outward temporary mercy, and so not at all of the covenant of grace.

Obj. 3. But all sacraments, being seals, are annexed to absolute promises; and, when rightly used in faith, have certainly their effect: but so this hath not, for then none should die that in faith do use it.

Ans. True, all sacraments of the covenant of grace are such, and the promises to which they are annexed are such; and God hath annexed a seal to assure our faith and hope of the fulfilling of spiritual promises, rather than

of any other outward mercy; but yet he may have appointed a seal for the confirmation of our faith as to the performance of them too. And of this nature is that other ordinance, namely, imposition of hands for increase of gifts; not that always, when rightly used in faith, it hath its effect infallibly, but it is a means appointed to convey the blessing, and confirms the promise of giving gifts to men, which yet is but indefinitely performed, as being of God's good pleasure. Yea, one end of this ordinance of anointing with oil (whenever in use) is here made but indefinite, and with a supposition, 'If he hath committed sins,' that is, in case he hath. And so it may be administered to this or that person with a supposition, if he be one of those (as he may be) unto whom the promise belongs.

Obj. 4. That anointing, Mark vi., and so healing, was extraordinary: and how can this here be then an ordinary ordinance, unless the same gift were continued now?

Ans. So imposition of hands did in the primitive times serve extraordinarily to convey extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost: yet was it ordained to serve as an ordinance of increasing gifts unto the world's end. And why may not this be so turned to a like use also?

Obj. 5. This gives countenance unto the papists' extreme unction, and condemns the reformed churches for rejecting it.

Ans. 1. The church of Rome retains almost all ordinances, only she hath perverted them. As she hath perverted this from being an ordinance of restoring health, and forgiving the temporary guilt of particular sins provoking God to that judgment, to become a sacrament of justification and forgiveness of all sins, and so a seal of the covenant of grace; and that not for the sick, but for all dying persons when past recovery, in which case it should not be used.

Now, 2, the reformed churches, seeing that such a sacrament could not be, and that this must needs be a perversion of it, did justly reject it as they used it; only in rejecting it (as in some other things) they went too far, even denying it to have that use of restoring the sick as a seal of the promise, and an indefinite means to convey that blessing, which God in mercy hath appointed it to be.

Use 1. We see here God's care over our bodies, as well as over our souls, in instituting an ordinance for sickness and restoring to health; and his full provision by ordinances for everything, and every condition.

Use 2. See also God's especial hand in that mercy of restoring his children unto health, and of blessing physic and means unto them, rather than to unbelievers, though it be but a common mercy; and therefore believers should exercise a special faith and dependence in the use of the means for recovery, beyond what ordinarily they use in other means for other outward mercies.

Use 3. We should raise our faith up to God, with more hope as to this mercy, than about any other outward mercies; for the promise of this hath a special seal.

Use 4. We may infer, that God doth afflict with sickness for particular sins.

Use 5. We may infer, that yet he doth not always do so, therefore an *if* is put in, 'If ye have committed sins.'

Use 6. From hence a proof may be fetched, that elders only should administer sacraments, as here they only are to anoint. And if the lesser sacrament be appropriated to them, then the greater much more.

Use 7. It should be one ground of further honouring elders, that God hath made them means of conveying health as well to our bodies as our souls.

So that if physicians be to be honoured (as you have it in Ecclesiasticus), then they much more, even with a double honour.

Use 8. We may infer that it is not necessary that all the church should be present. The elders only are to be sent for, since such rules are given by the apostle as may suit all churches and all circumstances; but now the church may consist of so many that all the members cannot meet without inconvenience to the sick party, and the persons sick may be so many that the church cannot meet so often. The elders therefore are set apart for the purpose, and may, and ought, to attend all such occasions.

Use 9. Yet the elders must be sent for by the parties, and that whilst there is hope of recovery, and not when they are a-dying.

Use 10. Take notice here of the privilege of church members above other believers. 'If any among you,' that is, of a church; and therefore it follows, 'send for the elders of the church.' If thou beest out of church fellowship and fallest sick, thou wantest one ordinance of recovery which a church member hath, and unto which there is both a promise and a seal annexed.

The toleration and liberty of conscience which we desire is, that we may not be forced to communicate as members in these parishes where we dwell, but may have liberty to have congregations of such persons who give good testimony of their godliness and peaceableness, and yet out of tenderness of conscience cannot communicate in their parishes, but do voluntarily offer themselves to join in such congregations, which how it may best stand with the peace of the kingdom, we humbly leave to the consideration of the magistrate.

This is our request, the first part whereof, viz., that we may not be forced to communicate as members in those parishes where we dwell, was in effect granted by the sub-committee of divines, and therefore we dispute it not. The other part, that we may have liberty to have congregations, being denied us, as unlawful for the magistrate to grant, we humbly offer the considerations which follow.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the lawfulness of gathering churches out of other churches.—How if rightly stated it is not a separation.—That the Christian magistrate may lawfully tolerate such churches.

That the lawfulness of this our desire to be indulged us by the State may appear, we humbly present these two things.

1. The principles upon which ourselves do go in this desire.
2. The reasons upon which the State may indulge it unto us.

1. It is not a separation as from no churches, but a secession as from such churches as we cannot, as our judgment stands, with a good conscience continue members in, and wherein by reason thereof we should want the enjoyment of the Lord's supper and other ordinances. And we desire that this profession of ours not to continue members may be but as charitably interpreted, as our presbyterian brethren would desire that their profession in one of their petitions should be, wherein they profess that they cannot with a good conscience continue to officiate in the administration of the Lord's supper as pastors in their congregations, whilst no further power for suspension of persons who appear unto them scandalous from the sacrament is given them, and that they shall in conscience be enforced to lay down their ministries, and many of them in private and in public have said that they must turn independents. Now as to them and their consciences as ministers, such

an evil doth arise as would make them lay down their ministries; so to us as members there ariseth so much as causeth us not to renounce, but to withdraw from present communion. The same kind of principle that they now go upon did we go upon, in withdrawing from our parishes, which principle they now hold forth to persuade a yielding by this state unto that rule they have presented to them.

2. It is not a gathering of churches out of churches as it hath been interpreted, which imports, 1, an activeness to persuade men from their churches, and to gain proselytes by all ways of industry, which the state may put restraint upon. 2. It imports a rending them from those churches whilst there yet remains an obligation to continue in them, and to remain members of those churches, but such a rending we acknowledge to be unlawful. But we desire in the behalf of those that are scrupled in communion with their churches, and whose consciences their ministers cannot satisfy, and whom in that case they ought not for ever to retain among them without ordinances, nor upon whom in such a case an indissoluble obligation lieth; we desire that these, rather than they should remain out of ordinances, may be gathered into new churches, and such churches wherein they may enjoy for substance the same ordinances and the same means of edification as will save them and build them up to life eternal, as well as in the parish churches others of the saints of God who can and do communicate therein do enjoy them. We may as well build up such congregational churches as the reformed churches have built up their several members amongst them, though differing each from other, as in England under episcopacy, and without power given to ministers to cast out the scandalous, and as those in Scotland, or Holland, or the Lutheran churches.

3. This is not to set up one church against another, *altare versus altare*, altar against altar, but one sister church by another, as the Dutch and French churches in England are and have been unto the churches of England and the parishes thereof; and this for the common edification of all sorts of saints, and the whole mystical body of Christ, who otherwise are kept divided from Christ in his greatest ordinances, and exasperated more one against another.

Now that this forbearance or indulgence of liberty from the common rule established, and hitherto continued in this church of England, may, without sin by the magistrate, of whom we humbly seek it, be granted to us, we humbly present this general reason. That which is not unlawful, nor contrary to the word of God for the magistrates of this kingdom, who have put this case to us, to allow, nor destructive to the peace of the kingdom, this the magistrates of this kingdom may allow to us without sin. But this request of ours is such.

The proposition in itself is clear, and the parliament's willingness to do it, they have expressed in their own ordinance.

1. I shall prove that it is not unlawful, nor contrary to the word of God, for the magistrates of this kingdom to allow the liberty which we request. The contrariety to the word of God for the magistrate to grant this, must necessarily lie in one of these two things, or both; either that it is so as to the magstrate's judgment, who hath established the rule of communion, or else that in the verity and truth of the thing itself, the nature of the rule by him established, is such as is immutably commanded by God in his word, and a command also of that high nature, as that it is not lawful for him to grant this indulgence of swerving from it. That in either of these cases, it would be unlawful to him, we do acknowledge. And look by how many degrees this request of ours falls short of such an height of contrariety as this is, either in the magistrate's conscience, or in the thing itself, so many

grounds and degrees of safety, as well as simple lawfulness, there is as to the magistrate's conscience herein to grant it.

1. If to the magistrate's conscience and judgment the rule should, in that wherein we desire a liberty, be prudential and *humani juris*, of human right, though about spiritual things, which himself may vary and alter as may suit best for the subjects of the kingdom, then he may lawfully grant us this liberty; for *quicunque potest legem condere, potest etiam privilegium concedere*, whoever may make a law may also grant a privilege; whereof this reason is given, *privilegium est lex privata quædam, ergo ab eo maxime dari potest, qui potest legem universalem condere*, a privilege is a certain private law, and therefore it may chiefly be given by him who can make the universal law. This (as becomes us) we humbly leave to the judgment and conscience of the magistrate himself, yet withal humbly propound these considerations. The unlawfulness of granting this (as to the magistrate's conscience) must be either in respect to the *terminus a quo* or *ad quem*, that is, either in regard of the leaving the parish churches wherein men scrupled to live, or in the setting up distinct churches from them; for of these two parts only is what we desire made up of.

1. As to the first, the obligation for men that dwell in the precincts of a parish cannot be such as that it should be unlawful for the magistrate to give allowance for men dwelling in parishes to be of another church than that in that parish; for the bounding of parishes in this kingdom, after the manner that now they are, was by a prudential law; and therefore, being the magistrate's own ordinance, it may be by him dispensed with. And although that now *de facto*, and through long continuance, churches by this ordinance have been formed up in parishes, and that those men that desire this liberty may have been members of some church therein, yet it is not unlawful for the magistrate to give them leave to cease to be members of those churches, and retain their dwellings, and to become members of some distinct church collected out of many parishes. For, 1, the magistrate might permit the people of this kingdom to be cast generally into churches otherwise bounded, without sin, and therefore may allow and permit particular members who are scrupled to cease to be members of the parish churches they are and were in; for otherwise this form of parishes, now there is a church state in them, is by reason of that state, as it were, consecrated, and so exempted from all alteration by the magistrate or themselves.

2. The late ordinance seems to permit as much as we have said to the servants and retinue of the king, his children, and noblemen.

3. Nor is this unlawful to the magistrates' conscience in respect of the *terminus ad quem*, viz., to permit setting up new churches of men having left the churches they were in; for, 1, if it were so, then they cannot erect by their authority in this kingdom any new church; but this they have done, as, for instance, Covent Garden, and the Inns of Court, authorising them for all ordinances of worship and government, though the most or many of the members came up out of several other parishes throughout the whole kingdom. And such is the case likewise of the king's household and noblemen's families, instanced in before. Besides, might not the magistrate give leave to any company of true worshippers of God to set up a new church, if they removed their dwellings, and made a new parish, even as lawfully as to grant a new corporation?

Obj. 1. But it may be objected, that the sin lies in neither of these, but in permitting them to set up churches of another constitution and government from what is established by the rule.

Ans. 1. We reply, that we do not set up churches of another constitution,

having the same ordinances for substance as the churches have which we leave, and not taking in any members but whom our brethren may or will acknowledge meet to be members of churches, such as are saints and truly godly, though of differing judgment from them. And as for presbyterial government, there are none, nay, not those that hold it to be by divine right, who judge that it is of the essence and constitution of a church, though a necessary ordinance therein, for the preserving of it pure.

Ans. 2. But, 2, if you will suppose that differences in the framing of churches should make them of another constitution, yet the magistrate might permit them; for, 1, this state did permit the Dutch and French churches, when of a differing, if not of as differing, a constitution (in these respects) from the churches amongst us then, as these of ours, which we desire, are now, who yet in continuance of time were become as natives, and understood our tongue. The bishops, when they would have reduced them unto their government, urged this very thing, and yet prevailed not in it in the worst times. Again, 2, if a company of Scotchmen, inhabiting among us, scrupling kneeling, and the government by bishops, &c., had then petitioned our state, as was in consultation, to have churches according to their order and constitution, might not our state then have permitted them?

Obj. 2. It may be objected, that though it were lawful for the magistrate to permit leaving or removing from these churches, and to set up new and distinct churches simply considered, yet the ground and principle upon which we do it is unlawful, because we leave those churches upon an error, viz., that we cannot without sin communicate in them, &c., and so to permit them, upon this error, is unlawful for the magistrate to do.

Ans. 1. We reply, 1, the magistrate's conscience need not be scrupled to permit what is in itself in the outward act warrantable, to them that yet do it out of an erring conscience. We have all in the assembly professed, that if we could agree in the same practices, though upon differing principles, which were openly professed (whereof the one or the other must be an error), yet we would not only permit this, but rejoice in it. Magistrates, in such cases when the outward act is lawful, and disturbs not the outward peace, inquire not into principles. The apostles themselves rejoiced in Christ preached, though they allowed not the principles of all that preached him: 'If Christ be preached out of envy, yet I will rejoice,' says the apostle; yea, perhaps it will appear, if it shall come to be debated, that the magistrate may tolerate an outward act, which is evil as to his conscience, as well as an act which outwardly may be good, only the principle being erroneous. And that he may do this, when there is not only an erroneous principle, but an hardness of heart, in men that desire it of the magistrate; for so Moses did in the case of polygamy, and that for the hardness of the Jews' hearts.

2. This ground would utterly make void the ordinance of parliament concerning us in that last part of it; for when the honourable houses did put it to our consideration how far tender consciences, that come not up to the rule, may be borne withal, they, judging their own rule to be lawful, must needs suppose all those tender consciences that could not come up to it to be in an error, and so far judge their practice to be unlawful, and yet are willing to indulge some practices to them, notwithstanding this erring conscience. And therefore the magistrate in conscience may indulge this to us, unless it can be demonstrated by our brethren that there is such a peculiar sinfulness in this principle, in its contrariety to the rule, as the magistrate cannot indulge it of all other.

3. This ground will put an impossibility upon the magistrate (if differing

in judgment about church government, &c., from our brethren's principles) ever to grant them by way of indulgence, much less to establish by a law what they have so earnestly sought. Nor indeed can our brethren (if they be of this opinion) petition the magistrate for this. For instance, our brethren have desired power of judging of scandal for suspension, to be lodged in the elderships, as that which belongs to them *jure divino;* if the honourable houses be never convinced in their consciences, but do judge those that request it upon this ground to be in an error, then they can never so much as indulge this to them, much less by an authoritative law give forth this jurisdiction to them over the subjects of this kingdom. This principle, besides what other reasons the honourable houses have had, will teach them to deny it; and then because some, or perhaps most of our brethren, hold national and provincial assemblies to be *divino jure*, and thereby do challenge a power of judicature and jurisdiction over all men's consciences, yea, over that of the supreme magistrates, in matters which they shall discern to be scandalous and unchristian, and the magistrate withal thinks this principle to be, not only an error, but of as much danger to his authority, as what this of ours can be pretended to be in the church, the magistrate hereby will be constrained to undo, upon the discovery of this principle, what he hath set up. Yea, and further, it is a principle of many of our brethren, that the church universal is a politic body in the whole, and the parts of it *jure divino*, and that every elder is an elder of the church universal, and so may and ought to unite into general councils, with the same right of jurisdiction that national or congregational assemblies have. The supreme magistrates of Europe, judging this an error, as they well may (and yet these are the principles of many of our presbyterian brethren, if not of the most), they are taught hereby, not to grant the presbyterial government, the principles whereof tend to this, even the setting up a body of elders, invested with ecclesiastical jurisdiction, unto which, *divino jure*, all churches, and Christian subjects and kingdoms must be subject; and so a foreign power ecclesiastical is set over all kingdoms, in an aristocratical way of government, as was the pope in a monarchical way, though with this difference, that there is a renouncing of infallibity in the one, but a requiring subjection, upon pain of excommunication, in both.

This may suffice, touching the magistrate's conscience, in relation to what may be supposed his principles and practices. Next we come to the nature of the rule of institution itself, which Christ hath laid upon members of churches, in respect of departing from other churches, and setting up new. The obligation, say we, laid by Christ in this respect, is not such, but that the magistrate may permit it with a good conscience. The lawfulness or unlawfulness hereof, if it be said to lie in respect to Christ's rule of institution, must accordingly be measured by what in the rule given by Christ is by institution, and also by considering what sort of institution and obligation it is, whether it be such as the magistrate cannot dispense withal without sin. Let us therefore consider the nature of the rule.

1. It may be taken for granted by the magistrates (as it is acknowledged by us), that church-fellowship is by the institution of Christ; so as both every believer is obliged to be of some church, where he may enjoy ordinances; as also that the churches themselves, the seat of ordinances, are settled by a divine right authorising of them; and, further, that whilst any one doth continue a member of any particular church, he is so long obliged to the duties to be performed by members therein.

Yet, 2, the unlawfulness of leaving this or that church, and gathering new (which is the thing controverted), depends upon a former thing, namely,

what, and how great (and that by institution), the obligation of members is to particular churches, whereof they are members; as if the question were, whether it were lawful for the magistrate to tolerate divorces, and a marriage with another? The measure and proportion of the unlawfulness or lawfulness hereof to him must be fetched from the nature of the obligation and tie, which, in marriages, God hath made to arise not simply from this, that marriage is God's ordinance (for so the relation of servant and master, of subject and magistrate, also is, and the duties, whilst that relation continues, are by God's ordinance, such or such); but further, it is from the strictness of the obligation or bond of the relation by God's special institution; for though the relation of master and servant, or servant and family, be (as was said) God's ordinance, yet there is not that obligation upon men for not leaving it, and entering into a new. Let, therefore, the obligation of churches and members (so far as from Christ's special command and Christ's institution it may any way be made appear) be impartially weighed; for thereupon do the proportions and degrees of unlawfulness depend; both how far it is lawful or unlawful to the persons that leave the churches, or to the churches that permit them so to do, or to the magistrate in whose dominions they are. For a right estimating of the firmness or looseness of this knot, in which the strength of this controversy lies, we propound these things to consideration.

1. The obligation of members to this or that individual church under the gospel, is far less than under the Old Testament, the obligation of members was to that national church. So that, to take a judgment of it, or an argument from the Jewish church, against removing from churches now, and gathering new, would (as it hath done many) much deceive us. And the difference herein is manifest, and also the ground of it; for the church under the Old Testament was but one by God's institution, and so one, as there were to be no more set up; and therefore (though it proved idolatrous) there was no setting up a new one. It was Jeroboam's sin, and the sin of the ten tribes, to set up *altare versus altare*, altar against altar, as they did. But now, everywhere pure hands are, and may be lift up to God, and spiritual sacrifices be offered everywhere as well as in the holy mount; only we are now bound unto church-fellowship, and the enjoyment of public ordinances, as well as they, and so if we cannot have it in one church, we are to seek it in another.

2. Hence it will be (we suppose) granted by our brethren, that it is a matter of much liberty (so it be done with peaceableness and sobriety), to remove from one church to another for civil conveniences; yea, out of many churches, to set up a new church for civil conveniences' sake (as for trade and the like, when a place is not well inhabited), much more for spiritual advantages.

3. Take the outward matter of fact (in this thing controverted), namely, to remove and leave our membership with these individual churches now extant, and to gather new, if you take the fact barely out of some supposed erroneous principle as the ground of it, or scandal and disturbance annexed thereto, it is a matter of liberty; at least it is such as needs not a warrant by a new institution or example which is called for. Neither as such doth the evil and unlawfulness of it lie in crossing or thwarting an obligation by institution indissoluble; but only it lies in the manner, ground, or the ill consequents of it, which are extrinsecal to it. It hath been laid upon our opinions and practices, that we held members of our churches under so hard and strict an obligation, and to that end do bind them by a covenant (yea, it hath been affirmed by some, that we bind them by an oath), as that they

must remove when we remove, and by divine right are so bound up to membership, to that individual church they are of, as not to depart from it. This, as we utterly renounce, so it will rather fall upon our brethren's principles, who would hold their members under so great a bond, that though they are scrupled in communion with them, and cannot satisfy their consciences, they, though arising to multitudes, must rather want these ordinances, than leave their churches and gather themselves into new. This hard imposition will especially follow, if they should put this unlawfulness upon the obligation of members unto their churches, or churches of such or such a form.

These things premised, we argue the lawfulness of this permission to be granted to members; and it is lawful both as to the magistrates' conscience, and to the churches they are members of, to permit them.

1. It is lawful to the churches and magistrates' conscience, to permit us our desire of being free of the churches (which is the case we in this debate have to do with), notwithstanding any obligation to continue therein *divino jure*. If this obligation of members to their churches were by divine institution, yet the magistrates might permit men scrupled to leave them, and be free therein. For, 1, yourselves have granted a liberty to consciences, scrupling receiving the Lord's supper in the parishes, which yet is a duty lies on them by divine commandment, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' &c. 2. Our brethren, whereof some yet hold classical and synodical assemblies to be *divino jure*, have granted also a freedom for such members as scruple the lawfulness of being subject thereto. Yea, 3, if any one that is now of a parish church remove his dwelling to another parish (which is permitted him), and consents not to be of the church of that parish he removes unto, we believe, that as the law of the land frees him from being a member of the parish church he came from, so our brethren's principles will free him from being a member of that parish church he comes unto, until he doth give his consent so to be. Thus easy a loose is there for freedom of members in respect of this obligation, and so for the magistrate's conscience to permit it.

But, 2, if this obligation were by a special divine institution indissoluble, as that of marriage was (and as this is not), yet the magistrate's conscience might permit a secession from it without sin. For so notwithstanding God's institution was, that in marriage the knot between two persons was such as man could not sever or put asunder, yet Moses, without sin, not only permitted divorces, and so a freedom from this so indissoluble obligation, but second marriages also, and this all the kings afterwards also permitted, and so by like reason it may be here in this case. And this instance evinceth not only the permission of the privative part of omission of communion with such churches, but the positive too, viz., the gathering of churches also, though both were in the judgment of the magistrate against an instituted obligation.

2. As for the positive part, to permit new churches to be gathered, of members out of these churches, the like practices and principles of our brethren will not only warrant the lawfulness of the magistrate to permit it, but make it warrantable for us, according to our principles, to do it.

For, 1, some of themselves have gathered a congregational church out of many churches, receiving and admitting upon their reformation, and forming up a church in their parish anew, an addition of members out of divers other parishes in city and country unto the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and to preaching, &c., in a constant way. If it be said they had not sacraments in their own churches, we reply, yet they had preaching, and they

should have remained hearers in their own parish churches, till God opened a way for sacraments there; for to this or the like law would our brethren oblige us unto. And again, constancy of communion for preaching and sacrament doth constitute them a member of that church they thus communicate with, more than dwelling in the parish, and occasional coming to that church doth constitute them a member of their own parish church. If it be said that this is *pro tempore*, for the time, and until such time as their own churches are reformed, when they will restore them again; we reply, that so also when the parish churches shall be reformed to our principle, we will be willing to restore all their members also, and will but relieve them with ordinances according to their consciences until that time, and will ourselves then become members of them. We only add this, that this some of our brethren have done before any authority of parliament did warrant it, which may stop their mouths at least in this so inculcated clamour (as our brethren's late reply presented to this committee) against us, who went out of the kingdom to gather new churches without offence to the magistrate.

2. Many of themselves have gathered a church out of a church in a parish, and that of the lesser out of the greater number. Our brethren do account all that have formerly received the sacrament with them to be of their church, and members thereof, for else they make wholly a new church; and why else do they claim power over all, and proceed by way of suspension, which is a censure (the objects whereof are only church members), and not by way of admission? Now for the minister, and a few in the parish whom we shall choose, to begin to make up a new body distinct from the rest, this act of theirs is either by way of separation and gathering a church out of a church (as they are pleased to call ours), or by way of church power and authority towards its own members. If the former, then we have our brethren's own practices warranting ours; if the latter (which our brethren by calling it suspension seems rather to put it upon), we ask and demand what power Christ hath put into the lesser part of a church, to take on them to suspend the greater part? And, further, we desire our brethren to resolve this committee, whether they think not themselves bound, according to the principles of church proceedings, to proceed to excommunicate (after two or three admonitions) all they do suspend, and so engage themselves to deliver to Satan more than half this kingdom in a month, if upon their admonitions they repent not. If they answer that they do thus take a few in a parish to the sacrament, and suspend the greater part by virtue of the authority of the magistrate; we reply, 1, that many have done this afore the ordinance of parliament came forth; and, 2, that then the magistrate may not only permit but authorise us to gather a church out of churches, or at least out of a church, as well as our brethren have done.

But, 3, as our brethren have gathered congregational churches out of a church, yea, churches, so their classical churches are electively by picking and choosing made up now at first, not of all the ministers in the parish churches, but of some chosen out from the rest. Whereas, according to the principles of their ecclesiastical obligation, the ministers of all churches should be taken in; but that would spoil reformation. And yet if they will tie us to the obligation of members, according to the law of particular churches, that because all in the parishes have universally been members of churches, and so are theirs already; and therefore we must wait a reformation of these churches, and take them as churches, and not make new; then should they by the like law take these all as ministers of churches into their classes, and trust God with his own ordinance, as they account it.

If, in the next place it may be objected, that it is not simply the breaking

of the bond of obligation to the churches of which we are members, that the unlawfulness of this consists in, but in the erroneous ground which we leave our churches upon, as if you cannot enjoy communion with them without sin; which error therefore binds ye as an erring conscience doth, and not to remove, and also binds the magistrates and the churches not to permit this freedom from our churches, but to continue in them till they recall that error;

We reply, Suppose this an error in the person (as the magistrate who hath propounded this case doth suppose this scruple of ours to be, and upon this supposition to resolve what forbearance he may permit), yet it is not unlawful for the magistrate to permit them this freedom whom he judgeth to be in this error. Besides the reasons mentioned before, yourselves also would permit us to forbear the Lord's supper without your censure, and to be free from the power of the assemblies, which forbearance yet you judge to be upon an unlawful ground in us.

But more particularly, to reduce this plea of our brethren against us to its right state,

1. We say, if the question be about the magistrates' or churches' conscience, whether they may permit it or no (as the question is), then it is not, whether this be an error in these members, according to the magistrates' or churches' judgment, but whether it be such an error as they have warrant from Christ so to bind it upon the conscience of the parties erring, as not to suffer them to practise it upon their own peril and account betwixt God and them, after due means be used to reclaim them. Our meaning in stating it thus will be cleared.

If the case be put as *in foro ecclesiastico*, in the ecclesiastical court, if this error come before the church these members are of (and we hope our brethren will not oblige the magistrates' conscience to more strictness herein than of the church itself), the question will not be whether these parties do err in their judgment, or whether doctrinally the church may not lay before them this error, and their grounds why they judge it to be so, and so press it upon them as a good means to reclaim them from this erroneous ground; but the question is, Whether they are judicially to bind the consciences of them that are in this error of scrupling communion? &c. So as this sentence, according to the law of Christ, should bind them up from practising accordingly, by virtue of this ordinance and power given the church over them, though in the particular so judged their private consciences remain as afore. And again, the question is, Whether it be such an error as the church is obliged not to permit them to remain in, or to practise accordingly, but is bound to retain them; and if they do otherwise, to excommunicate them. In a word, the question is, Whether there lie an ecclesiastical obligation, both upon the church, to bind this error judicially upon conscience, and to retain these persons ever; and also an obligation upon the persons, the church so judging, to continue still as members.

Now this we take for granted, that churches will not take on them to bind thus judicially upon the consciences of their members, whatever they account an erroneous principle, nor bind them up from the practice of whatever they shall doctrinally declare to be upon an erroneous ground, especially when otherwise the outward fact simply considered is lawful, which is the case in hand. And that this alleged is such an erroneous principle as they ought judicially to bind upon the consciences of their members, it remains upon our brethren to prove; for when they shall take on them to prohibit a practice, otherwise lawful, upon this error, the burden lies on them to make it forth, to be of that nature as that they dare bind it upon the consciences

of others, to so great a prejudice to them, as to deprive them of the ordinances of Christ.

But, besides the expectation of our brethren's making this forth, we humbly present these reasons why the churches are not bound thus to bind this error upon their brethren who are members of them, nor their members thus scrupled to be bound up thereby.

1. Because it is not an error of that degree of erroneousness, as should be the object of such a judicial binding it upon their consciences, it being but such an error as comes under that rule which the assembly hath voted, that may stand with piety, wherein godly and learned men possibly may and do differ, and such errors the assembly dischargeth from judicial binding by censures.

2. Again, our brethren have granted that after due means used they will not constrain (that is, by censures or otherwise) any that scruple communion with them, they own that principle which is the foundation of what we desire, and do thereby grant that this error is not the object of church censures.

3. Therefore they are not to censure this practice neither which we desire, upon this supposed error.

1. For if the unlawfulness of removing from these churches, and gathering new, be founded upon this supposed erroneous ground of it, and not upon the law of the obligation of church membership, and if it is simply considered in the outward act lawful, then if the error itself be not worthy of an ecclesiastical binding, the practice founded hereupon is not; and if it be not, then may the churches tolerate it.

2. Otherwise if any member of a church remove from his church to another upon a mistaken ground; as for example his not edifying under that ministry or the like, which the church he is in judgeth an error; hath that church power ever to retain him, because his going away was upon an erroneous principle, so as they may not dismiss him; or have they power from Christ to bind his conscience not to remove, because they judge him to do this upon an erring principle?

3. Yea, we humbly offer it to consideration, if after due means used to convince men of this error, when they shall find they cannot persuade them, they should not say as they to Paul, 'The will of the Lord be done;' though the thing be against their own judgment (as that was); and not only permit them to go from them, but assist them in gathering a new church, according to the principles of their own consciences, whilst they therein set up the substance of God's worship, and profess to hold all communion in other ordinances with them as far as possible they can? For,

1. The general obligation, by Christ's command and appointment, to all sorts of believers to be in church fellowship, wherein to enjoy all ordinances, especially the sacraments, is a greater obligation than the obligation that members can have to any particular churches. We are all sure that this general law is an institution of Christ, and absolute, and the obligation to particular churches is far less, as hath been shewn. Now, as the law of lesser obligations useth to yield to the more universal, so should this; yea, in this case men keep more to the law of communion with the whole universal church, for they partake of all the same ordinances with them by which the communion of the church catholic with Christ their head, and one with another, is more observed, than if, in being deprived of this communion, they held communion but in some things with a particular church.

2. We humbly offer that as for such errors for which members should not be excommunicated out of their own church, and deprived of the ordinances therein, for such errors Christ's mind is, that they should not be deprived of them where else they may have them. If there were churches

extant of their judgment anywhere in the world, why might they not be permitted to remove to them? As put the case: When our nonconformists were scrupled in kneeling at the sacrament, or to have been present at the liturgy, and so were deprived of the ordinances; suppose this to have been an error in them, to have scrupled the lawfulness hereof (as we may well suppose it may be the judgment of some of our brethren that it was an error in them), might not these have removed into Scotland, to those churches where the pure ordinances might be had? And then again, suppose there were no such churches extant, were it not a lawful way of attaining to enjoyment of the ordinances by making a new church, such at least as the magistrate in tenderness to them might permit?

3. If the primitive condition and differences among the saints in the first erecting churches give not an example, yet they do afford a principle of equity for this. The differences between the circumcision and uncircumcision were such as the circumcised Jewish Christian would not eat together with the uncircumcised, though professing Christianity. How many years this continued we know not, nor how long it remained in many men's consciences after the decision of the apostles about the non-necessity of circumcision, Acts xv.; but suppose it did remain in many for a long while, as appears by the epistles to the Galatians, Colossians, &c., yet surely Jesus Christ did alike provide a way of enjoyment for church fellowship and communion in ordinances for the one as well as the other, though the difference in judgment was such as the one could not eat with another. And that Christ's mind was that both should have the ordinances, though thus differing, is clear, because 'in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed;' and notwithstanding this difference (because it might stand with piety in either), they all were baptized into one body, the church universal, and did drink (which alludes to their having the Lord's supper) into one spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. The apostles did labour all they could to allay this difference, but did they forbid either to make churches apart, if they could not be reconciled in one? As Peter said in the like case, 'Can any man forbid water to them that have received the Holy Ghost as well as we Jews?' so, have the apostles anywhere forbidden, or can any man forbid, those to have the sacrament in churches truly constituted, that cannot through an invincible scruple receive the sacrament in the churches they have been born in? Would not and ought not general councils, if now called, if they could not reduce the churches to one rule, to permit each their way according to their several principles? And there are as great differences in the reformed churches as amongst us and our brethren.

4. Yea, doth not God profess to accept practices for the substance good, though upon erroneous grounds? Rom. xiv., 'He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; and he that eateth not' (out of scruple of conscience, which was an error), 'his not eating was to the Lord also;' and upon that very ground he commands us not to judge them in so doing, because he accepted them.

5. Is not charity more seen in allowing to such tender consciences those ordinances which are of so general influence to build them up to life, though with the practice of some error or upon some erroneous principle (which God will pardon, and men should indulge to them), than for that error for which they cannot justly be punished with civil or ecclesiastical censure, to detain them from those ordinances by which they may be recovered and healed? This is as if one who had some disease of smaller moment in probability incurable, and yet not mortal in the issue, should yet be denied such food as would make him more vigorous and fitter for all duties to God and men, when in this case it is more charity to allow it him.

CHAPTER XIII.

What liberty of conscience is to be indulged.—That peace and love is the great law of Christ that is to be observed among Christians, who ought therefore to bear with one another.—What principles and practices are contrary to this law.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.—Rom. XV. 1–4.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. VI. 2.

I intend in this discourse to strengthen our faith as to the having liberty of our consciences in times of difficulty. One great foundation of our faith is, that Christ died to take away that enmity which is in the hearts of his people one towards another, which I have shewed in another discourse.* My design is now to state the case of liberty and conscience, and to shew how agreeable it is to the laws and rules of Christ.

The course which I will steer is this: first, to state the business, as,

1. It is not the general liberty of all, of what religion or kind soever, which we prosecute; for, if you observe it, in both these texts (as there are abundance of other scriptures to like purpose), the consideration is of what is the duty between Christians professing Jesus Christ, by virtue of Christ and his blood. Those that would make this liberty of conscience to be extended to all men, weaken our prayers wonderfully, and do weaken our arguments;† for the hold we have upon the men among whom we live is, that we all profess ourselves Christians, and we do not plead for liberty to be given to atheists, infidels, or Mahomedans, but we plead for Christ, and you will find the strength lies there.

2. We profess this principle, that all saints should be of one mind, as in 1 Cor. i. 10, 'That ye be all of one mind, of one judgment; I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' (he urgeth Christ too) 'that ye all speak the same thing; that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, that you, being of the same mind and judgment, may acknowledge this.' It is this that all saints should seek, and the name of Jesus Christ should cause a reverence to the judgment of Christians.

3. But if this cannot be effected (if that be the case), you have the rule, Philip iii. 15, 16. If men be otherwise minded, what then is to be done? The rule is both there and here, forbearance. When we say forbearance, and cry out for liberty, our meaning is not that we should therefore remain indifferent whether this truth prevail; no, we are to contend earnestly for that faith we think to be faith, and once given to the saints, but it must be by gospel means.

* Discourse of Christ the universal peacemaker, in Vol. I. of his works. [I suppose the reference is to the sermons on Ephesians ii. 14–16, in Vol. II. of this edition.—Ed.]

† This discourse was written in 1646, when there were those heats against the dissenting brethren, who asserted the congregational way of churches, and therefore all must be understood as relating to those times.

4. While we plead for liberty unto persons that are godly, and profess Christ, we do not favour the error that is laid upon us, of pleading for a toleration of all heresies. It was long ago said by the bishop of Lincoln, that was lord-keeper, that it is an argument out of the devil's logic, to argue from the concrete to the abstract. A man is sick of such a disease, insomuch as that the humour of the disease requires food that is in itself hurtful, and yet the man must live, and he cannot live without food. In this case, what is to be done? You must preserve the life of the man. Physicians in that case do so, and allow that which otherwise they would not allow. Suppose men mingle with the ordinances of Christ superstition, the diseased humour of their spirits run out that way, you must, for Christ's sake, bear with them, for the man is in Christ, and the man must be fed and nourished; you must allow him what is mingled with superstition, without which he cannot partake of the ordinances, and God will pardon the error, and bless the ordinance. And in this case, it is not the error we indulge, but Christ in his person, and conscience in him, and we do it for Christ's sake; and if you go by outward force, and keep him from what would edify him, you endanger his salvation: Rom. xiv. 4, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.'

5. The apostle's rule is, though a man be in an error, you should be more earnest to regard the general end of his glorifying God in the substance of what he doth, than to punish his error. It is clearly the meaning of Rom. xiv. 6–8, 'He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord, &c. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord,' &c. What is the meaning? You are to regard the common principle of Christians. There is a substance of worship, and though the man err, yet you are to regard more what he doth to God, than you are to regard his error, and you are to nourish that more, than to go and beat out his error by a violent course. This is certainly the apostle's meaning. The rise of what the apostle saith in the text, Rom. xv., is clearly this, that it was not a matter indifferent, but was about things wherein one side were in a great error, and was in the wrong very much; and, I think, Calvin acknowledgeth it, the case here was concerning the whole of the Jewish worship, though he gives instances only of days, and concerning their Sabbaths, and new moons, and meats that were forbidden. Now, let all the world judge, if he that did abstain, did it as thinking it indifferent, and so would be at liberty; no, but in conscience I ought not, saith a Christian Jew, to neglect those ordinances; they were given by God, and we ought all to be subject to them; they were not things indifferent; the worship of God was stated in the one and in the other, so that it was not a thing indifferent, as they stated it; yet in this case, and upon this occasion, when matters did stand thus, doth the apostle plead his argument, as he does in Rom. xiv. and xv. The true intent of their meeting, Acts xv., was to compose the difference, by letting the Jews alone, to go on in their way, though they were in an error; and as for the Gentiles, to let them be free, only to warn them to take heed of offending the Jew; of all Scriptures I know, it is most abused; it is alleged for using an authority, whenas the thing is for an accommodation. But as to the stating the question, you find the apostle Paul flies upon the Galatians, and overruns them, and that because they kept days and times, &c. You find here, he pleads otherwise. What is the difference? In Rom. xv., he tells

you, there was two opinions on foot; there were some of them wretched men, that said, a man could not be saved unless he were circumcised, and kept the whole law, ver. 5.

What do I gather hence? If a doctrine come to be stated as in the foundation of religion, and urged so as it comes to a point of salvation and damnation, says Paul there, I will not bear with you, no, not for a moment. He falls upon them in his epistle to the Galatians to the height, stays not a moment; but come to the epistle to the Romans, here we find that those Judaising Christians did not urge it by way of salvation and damnation, but went the moderate way, that it ought to be commanded, and that it was *vi præcepti* to be done; and he here pleads for liberty, and that there should be forbearance, and it is a great argument. I will not say what the magistrate hath to do, but this I will say, the magistrate is not to be more severe than the church, unless it be in his own concernment of the civil peace; this is the state of it. So now I come to the argument, the thing itself.

1. And the first head of arguments I run upon is this, that in such cases of differences thus stated, Christians ought to be equally minded one towards another: Rom. xv. 5, 'Now the God of patience grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus.'

1. This being like-minded, is not oneness of judgment, which our brethren would carry all these places to, but equality of mind or like-mindedness in affection one towards another, notwithstanding differences: Rom. xii. 16, 'Be of the same mind one towards another.' It is the same word in the original; that is, let the same equality of love and affection be kept up mutually one to another; let affections continue to one another, upon the same terms. It is not spoken of oneness of judgment and opinion, but of affection; it is spoken so, Rom. xii. 15, 'Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;' that is, have like sympathy and feeling of one another's afflictions; and then, 'Be of the same mind one towards another,' ver. 16; and 'Have peace among yourselves,' Philip. iv. 2. There be other scriptures where it is used for mutual comfort, agreement and affections, equal affections and equal dealings upon it. That we ought to be so affected, notwithstanding differences, and that this is here intended, is clear enough. It is not only clear from the 14th chapter, which comes in upon occasion of those differences, but the text clears it, that they should be equally minded in case of difference. Take the 5th verse; it says, 'The God of patience and consolation grant you to be equally minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus.' Here is prayer, and every prayer is usually framed according to the matter, and the thing that is required. If he prays that they should be all of one mind, why should he say, *The God of patience*, God that is the God of patience, the author and God of patience and consolation, work such a like-mindedness in you. If his meaning were, that all should be of one mind and judgment, there were no need to say, the Lord give you patience. If his scope were that they should be of one mind, there needed no patience. Truly, they that impose need not patience, but those that were imposed upon; but he speaks of patience of one to another, and one is to be patient as much as the other; and truly there needs patience to bear with differences: ver. 1, 'You that are strong, please not yourselves, but bear the infirmities' (as porters do). Eph. iv. 2, You should tolerate, and suffer 'with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.' It is plain it is meant in point of difference, that they should be equally minded to keep the bond of union in the bond of peace. The meaning is, while you agree in such things, in which the common and great concernments of Christianity, and of the Spirit's working upon all sorts

of Christians are found; this is the bond of the difference in externals, and therefore bear that difference with patience.

2. A second consideration is from ver. 5, 'According to Christ Jesus.' There is a great deal lies in this; take heed of casting your case of toleration into the common case of Turks and Mahomedans; you then weaken yourselves, for the toleration must be according to Christ. We have a great strength and hank upon them that profess Christianity, to urge Christ upon them. Let them look to themselves; for though the universal toleration must have other principles, yet that toleration which we seek, and which is according to Christ, and so is to move them from such a consideration, supposing men to be in Christ; that toleration hath a great, a mighty, a strong foundation, which the apostle here brings upon them. The meaning is, all sorts of obligations drawn from Christ, which either Christ's example, or our common interest in him, or relation to him, or the nature and law of having him to be our head and our Redeemer, afford, are a complete topic for our liberty. And let them come with all their arguments out of the Old Testament, I will but only preach Jesus Christ, and say, What say you to Jesus Christ? 'According to Jesus Christ,' says the apostle. He first urgeth what Christ hath done upon earth; 'Let every one please his neighbour according to Christ.' Secondly, What was his carriage since he went to heaven? Ver. 7, 'Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God,' both Jews and Gentiles, with all their differences. Thirdly, he urgeth the like intent Jesus Christ had in dying: Did he die for you of the circumcision only? He died for the uncircumcision also. Did he die for you of the uncircumcision only? No, he died for you of the circumcision also, ver. 8. One would think it should end the controversy, but that men have a zeal not according to knowledge. Now, then, out of all this being opened, take only that argument, 'according to Christ,' and you are complete in him for liberty of conscience; and methinks all the world must vanish before it.

My assertion is this, that saints or persons professing Christ, though they differ, yet being in Christ they ought not to judge or despise, but forbear one another, according to Christ.

In proving this assertion, I shall keep myself to Christ, and use such arguments as the considerations of relation of Christ to us, and of us to him, will afford.

1. And I begin first with the example of Christ: 'Let us,' says the apostle, 'bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves, for even Christ pleased not himself.' Do you know what he bare when he was upon earth? Do you know what his light was (for all the business is, men have light for this or that which they would impose, and they think much others should not yield to it), who had light? He that had life, hath light; could all the earth come up to this light if he were now on earth? How did he shew his condescension to his apostles, to his disciples, who had great differences, great fallings short? He pleased not himself; for a person who had all that knowledge comes and lives amongst a company of poor ignorant people, so that he was forced to leave the half of his light unmanifested; and when he comes to part from them, John xvii., he was forced to pray that God would teach them to know that he came from him. Thus Christ did bear with them when he lived on earth.

I may shew it also, how he hath borne with his saints since he went to heaven; he found the saints (and so in all ages) differing: some would have circumcision and others not. Whom doth Christ take part with? Neither with the one nor the other, but receives all to the glory of God.

2. I pass now from the example of Christ, Rom. xv., and I come to the law of Christ: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,' Gal. vi. 2.

When Jesus Christ had given us his example, he left it with a law: 1 John ii. 8, 'A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' What is this commandment? 'He that says he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even till now.' This was true in him first, that is, it had its real existence in him first, he made it good in his example; and then in you, it becoming a law from him to you, he performs it for you, and he hath given the law to you. Now I shall but add this premise for the interpretation of this place: it is true, this place in the Galatians comes in upon the occasion of the spiritual restoring and setting in joint with meekness one that was overtaken in a fault; says the apostle, 'Bear ye one another's burdens.' But let me say this to you, this is not a particular maxim restrained to that thing, for it is a general maxim, as the apostle in abundance of places brings a great general maxim for a particular occasion. Now it is clear in that Rom. xv., there is a general maxim, we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak; and there it is spoken of a Christian forbearing, of a conscientious forbearing, and here it is spoken in a spiritual sense. Those that are spiritual ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, in several ways, in restoring, if one falls for want of light, &c. But the equity of the maxim is one and the same, so that this rule here, Gal. vi. 2, falls in, and is as applicable to that, Rom. xv., as to the particular purpose he brings it for in Gal. vi. This premised, let us consider the explication of this his saying, 'Bear one another's burdens;' what is the meaning?

(1.) It is to bear the burden we have from another, that is his meaning; what is burdensome from another to thee or me, this we are to bear.

(2.) Being applied to be all one in the general, and the occasion being but a branch of it, in Rom. xv., the meaning must be, that one party is to bear, and bear the burden indifferently, as well as the other, for it runs upon equal and mutual terms; and if any of the two should bear most, it should be the strong; they are to bear as porters do. Who are to be porters? Those that are strong certainly; and if need be, they are not only to carry their burdens for them, but to carry the weak themselves, as Christ doth his poor lambs in his arms. Now, those that get ecclesiastical power in their hands, take upon themselves to be strong, and call themselves strong. Do they do so? Truly then they are bound by this, Rom. xv. and Gal. vi., to bear. They are to be the bearers, and the more they take themselves to be strong, the more doth the law of Christ come upon them to bear the infirmities of the weak. You see this place doth exhort indifferently to an equal bearing. Now then how unsuitable is it for those that are strong to run into so unequal a practice, as to go and lay the burden upon the weak with all their authority. And, that they may ease their spirits of the burden, they, feeling the infirmities of the weak, will not come up to them and bear with them. In this case they ease their spirits by imposing those heavy burdens upon the weak; as it is plainly implied in Rom. xv., 'Please not yourselves:' bear one another's burdens, and please not yourselves; it imports, it is the greatest pleasing a man's self that can be, to make others of my mind in point of religion, and to see others subject to my understanding. They constrain you to be circumcised, says the apostle, Gal. vi. 12, 13; and what is the rise of it? Ver. 13, that they may glory in your flesh. When you out of weakness yield, they glory in their victory, and so ease themselves. To be lords of

your faith, is what the false apostles sought for; to be lord of your faith, and to see you practise as they do in point of religion, is more than to be lords of men's estates or lives. If those men that are strong do thus, how do they bear one another's burdens? How do they bear the infirmities of the weak? How do they suffer, or at least, how do they so suffer the weak, as the weak ought to suffer them? for they must bear one another's burdens. Truly to see another differ, is both a burden to men's corruptions, that would please themselves to see others of their mind; and it is also pleasing to grace (simply considered) to bring men off from their errors, though to do it by force and violence is a sin and an error. It is a burden to grace, and a burden to corrupt nature, to see another dissent; you all find it in part, those that are strong, and strong in power too. In this case, what doth Jesus Christ and his apostles call to? Not to please ourselves, and so to deny both the desires of grace; in that case, that would be inordinate, and of corruption, that would put men upon it. So much for opening this 'bear one another's burdens,' applied, falling in with that Rom. xv.

3. Herein the force of the argument must lie; that this is a special law of Christ: 'And so fulfil the law of Christ.' Love one to another was the general law Christ gave, but to bear the burdens one of another, which is the burdensome part, this hath the title of the whole law which Christ hath given for saints. [1.] To love one another is the special law in respect of other commandments of Christ; but for saints to bear with the burdens of others (which is one branch of the law), this is more the law of Christ. If you would see the general law of Christ, look into John xv. 12, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;' ver. 17, 18, 'These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you;' which is, as if he had said, You saints need love one another all of you, for you will have enough of the world's hatred, you need not lay load one upon another; you need not lay burdens, persecutions, one upon another, therefore do you saints see to this, that you love one another. I bring it for this, to shew that it is Christ's special law: 'This is my commandment,' says Christ. Of all the duties of the ten commandments, Christ singles out this, to call it his commandment, as enforced from his love: 'These things I command, that ye love one another,' John xiii. 34. Take it thus, says Jesus Christ here: I have died for you, and I leave this commandment of all commandments in special manner to you; and I have reason to do it, for I bear with you, and I must bear with you when I am in heaven; and if there be any commandment which is more peculiarly mine, it is this, 'That you love one another.' My Father loves you, and gave me to die for you; and 'I have chosen you out of the world;' but my commandment is, that you love one another, John xv. 12. The apostle, 1 John ii. 7, calls it a new commandment, yet it was from the beginning. To love our neighbour, that is, every man, was a duty from the beginning, from Adam. Cain was the first who broke this command, and he hated his brother for religious respects. This was an instance from the beginning of wickedness. Nay, says God, I will part you; and so from the beginning he suffered a separation. Seth came, and when he had posterity, Gen. iv., men began to worship God together, and they were severed from the world. Cain's seed, how did they corrupt that separation! They should have loved one another; this was the commandment, but this commandment was clearly obliterated. Christ comes and enforces it anew; and, says he, I have loved you and died for you, and this commandment I give you. Christ revives it which had been from the beginning, so that it is now enforced from Jesus Christ's having renewed it, having died for his people, and having

borne with them, and having given them that example. This example passed into a law, a special law. This law of love is enforced from Christ.

[2.] It is enforced from God the Father too: 1 John iv. 11, 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' This was to confirm the general, yet special, law. What person doth he speak of? God the Father. Look into the words before, 'He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' You have both Jesus Christ's law, and God the Father's law, in this giving his Son, that saints should thus love saints. Truly in the old law all the ten commandments had this, 'The Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt,' to enforce them; but if you come to this law of saints, men that profess themselves Christians have both Father and Son, and the enforcement of the love of either put with an edge upon his commandment. This is my commandment (says Christ); this is the law of Christ (still remember), to bear one another's burdens. This is a special law of that special law, because it is the hardest of all the rest.

[3.] Nay, thirdly, he tells us the love of the Father is perfected in us if we love another, 1 John iv. 12. God gains nothing by it; but you are the gainers, for his love is perfected when you love one another. I would but bring this special law of Jesus Christ to all saints; this love which hath the love of the Father in sending the Son, and hath the love of Jesus Christ himself, to put the weight and edge upon it; and this law of love is obligatory to all saints, and that upon mutual terms in point of forbearance, Eph. i. 15.

3. There was another commandment left; and what was that? 'Have peace amongst yourselves.' It runs upon mutual terms one towards another. He did leave it (you know) before he died. It is a strain he runs much upon: John xiv. 27, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' After he died and rose again, says he, John xx. 19, 'Peace be with you,' and among you. Whilst he was alive, he spoke the same thing: Mark ix. 50, 'Have grace in yourselves,' to save you; and next to that, 'Have peace one with another.' And the case was this, in the beginning of the sermon they fell out who should be greatest, ver. 34, 35; he ends the sermon with this, 'Have peace one with another.' Have peace; wherein doth peace lie? Peace lies especially in taking up cases of difference; therein is peace required. It respects differences; and all by this rule, for love and peace. He foresaw that differences would be in his church to the end of the world, and he urgeth this thing because so necessary both for the ordering and preserving his church, for he could never have built it else. So soon as he went to heaven, they quarrelled about circumcision and uncircumcision; had not the apostles endeavoured peace, they had never set up the church of the Gentiles. For there was a peddling principle, that a Jew must not preach to a Gentile; and if Christ had not convinced them of the folly of it, where had his church been?

Lastly, It is a new commandment: John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another;' ver. 35, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;' chap. xvii. 21, 'That they all may be one' (that is, amongst themselves) 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' It is called a new commandment, because the most excellent of all the rest; as a new song and new wine is meant when Christ says that he would drink no more of the vine till he drank it new in the kingdom of heaven; that is, more excellent wine.

These plain and transcendent admonitions, both for love and peace, have been given by Christ, because he did foresee all the differences that have arisen in his church, and which did arise in those first times, and therefore

saw that these rules of peace and love were necessary to begin, and constitute, and then to keep up and preserve his church. He could not have set up his church of Jews and Gentiles, much less have kept them in peace, unless these his laws had taken place among them. And such a mutual love and peace shewn in bearing one another's burdens (and this is to be exercised even toward all saints, great and small, weak and strong; and this, though but a branch, is dignified with the title of the whole law), is so peculiar and transcendent a duty, as was sufficient to characterise them to be Christ's disciples, with a notorious difference from that love and peace which is to be found in the world one towards another. And this love and peace is to be shewed among the saints one towards another, with a difference from what they are in any way to shew unto the world, who doth and will hate them; yea, it is to rise so high as to be an evidence to the world that Christ is the Saviour of this world of saints, and the head, and guide, and inspirer of them with such a peace and love. And this rule of love is to be exercised even toward all saints, great and small, weak and strong; and though it is but a branch, yet it is dignified with the title of the whole law. It is passed into a special law above all other laws; for this (saith Christ) is my law. And it is the hardest part of that law to bear the burdens one of another, of saints small and weak; and yet it is called by the name of that whole law, though it be but a branch of it. You have heard it is such a law as saints should observe one to another; they are enforced from the Father and from Christ to love so as no company in the world should love, and with difference from what love they bear to the world. They ought to be at such peace one with another, so to bear one with another, as no other men would bear with others in the world beside; yea, it is such a love of forbearance and peace, that men may know by it that they are disciples of Christ, John xiii. 34, 35. We are to shew such love to each other as is not to be found amongst any sort of men upon earth, and such a peace, such a love, that it may manifest that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, John xvii. 21; and do this to saints, and to all saints. Now, truly peace is a fruit of love, Col. iii. 10, 14.

From whence I may infer, that the principles and practices of our presbyterian brethren, though persons godly, do yet in this respect not only fall short of this rule in degrees of love, for all are thus deficient, but run cross to it.

1. For whereas Christ would have saints, by virtue of their Christianity, to love all those whom they judge to be saints in a different respect from the world, our presbyterian brethren, even in religious matters, extend their charity and rule in things of worship to the generality of men in a nation. There must be a national church, made up of all who are plainly the world. They will take in men merely moral and civil in their outward deportment, and make such rules and constitutions of church fellowship as shall take in these and suit with them. And by this rule multitudes of poor saints in a nation are excluded, who cannot join in such a loose constitution of a church.

2. Men do it for the world's sake, and to please them, that thereby they may strengthen their interest, while they make up their party by joining with the world in ordinances; whereas Christ says to his disciples, The world will hate you, but do you love one another. And now what then is the quarrel between their dissenting brethren and them? Their dissenting brethren say, We love you, and are very desirous to join with you in the ordinances of God; but you join herein with the world, which we cannot do. Upon this they cry out upon us as schismatics. What a terrible thing is this! They make up a party in the world of those who have only a form of godliness,

contrary to the rule which enjoins us to turn away from such, 2 Tim. iii. 5. And contrary to the rule of loving all the saints, they exclude a great many who cannot unite in the laxness of their discipline, and act oppositely to the law of bearing the burdens of such, and act thus in matters too wherein they cannot convince them that they are in the wrong.

3. In framing an outward administration of religion for the world, as well as for the saints of their judgment, they greatly gratify the world. And then it is no wonder if the world be at peace with them; for if they will own them and their children, and admit them to their sacraments, they have in religious respects what they did desire, and for other things of religion they are not much inquisitive. For so they have but a religion, they are not apt to be scrupulous in things of that nature, and so they are at peace. But what is the peace which they have with these? It is but a dull peace, such as Rome hath amongst her children, who go by an implicit faith, insomuch as there is little religion and little inquiry about it among them. But a man whose mind God hath enlightened, and who knows Jesus Christ to the purpose of salvation, is an inquisitive creature, and must be satisfied; and it is his burden if he is not, and this burden they ought to bear. But they gratify the world rather to make up an interest with them, and so they may have peace.

4. They do that which is worse than all this; for when they have joined with the world, they make use of worldly force and compulsion, and employ and call in aid and strength from the world, whereby to compel their poor dissenting brethren to their way. How contrary is this to Christ's advice and counsel, who tells us that the world will hate us sufficiently, and therefore we need not lay load upon one another. But they joining with the world, it will afford them carnal weapons in this case, because of its hatred to any who are godly. And yet all this must not be counted persecution. But I would ask, How doth the antichrist of Rome persecute? Is it not by imprisonment and death? And is not confiscation of goods, though not materially the same punishments, yet a sort of persecution too?

5. They do this for points of doubtful disputation (as the apostle's phrase is) for both the things urged by them, and the power which they challenge to impose them, are such. They are such disputable matters, as men may dispute their hearts out about them, and yet not prevail to a conviction. But oh, how is this such a peace, such a love of saints to all saints, as should and might distinguish them from all the world besides! For it is such a distinguishing love and peace which Christ enjoins as is not to be found in all the world besides. It is so remarkable a love, that by it it might be discerned even by the world that these are Christ's disciples. How many differences far greater doth Rome, the antichristian world, indulge to her children, in variety of orders, points of doctrine, &c. And yet these men will not allow a liberty in smaller things; they will not use the same forbearance as the men of the world commonly observe one towards another.

6. They farther herein go against as clear rules as any are in Christianity or the Scriptures, while they thus impose things of doubtful disputations. Is not that a clear rule, Philip. iii. 15, 16, 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.' We are to leave the rest to God, to reveal when he pleaseth. It is another clear rule which we have: Rom. xv. 1, 'You that are strong, bear the infirmities of those who are weak.' This we are to do to fulfil the law of Christ. Is it not a clear rule, 'that every one should please his neighbour for edifica-

tion'? Rom. xv. 2. We should then follow things that make for peace, and whereby we may edify one another; but when they act thus contrary to these rules, they pretend that their design is to procure peace in the churches, as if the only way to peace (which they take for granted too) were to impose the more common, and generally prevailing, opinions concerning faith and worship upon others who do dissent; and if they do not submit unto those impositions, to restrain them from holding any religious assemblies, or enjoying among themselves those ordinances of the gospel which may edify them. If we look into Holland, we shall find a toleration of worship allowed to those who dissent from the established constitution; if we go to Turkey, the East Indies, or to any government of Mahomedans, we shall see that peace is granted even by them to Christians, by a toleration, and forbearance of them. And, what! must there be no way among Christians for peace but to constrain all to be of one mind, and that in things of lesser and doubtful moment?

7. They retain these principles and resolutions even while themselves are persecuted by other protestants, who profess to do it out of the same conscience and principles upon which they themselves do proceed (only *mutatis mutandis*), and think they ought to do so, and that they do God good service in it. Our presbyterian brethren have been put by, and not suffered to preach, as being thought not to be legally ordained, or not to worship God as they ought. And while they cry out Persecution, persecution, when it falls thus upon themselves, how can they have any secret reserve, or entertain any principles to lead them unto a resolution to do the like things unto others whom they judge to be godly persons, and who differ less from them in doctrines and substantials of worship than they do from other persons? I will only say this, in allusion to that in Ezekiel, Wilt thou persecute under the power of those who persecute thee?

8. The most moderate of them condescended indeed so far, that saints unsatisfied to hold communion with them might continue in their congregations, without being pressed to come to the Lord's supper; but it would not be allowed that they should enjoy this ordinance in other assemblies of their own. Thus it was debated in the assembly, and the reason given for it was, such an allowance would be against the common peace, and disturb the common established rule. And so, out of reverence to their opinion and way, others must stand out, and be excluded from this great ordinance for ever, in reverence to, and for the sake of, the pretended peace of their church. The great business pretended is peace, the peace of the church; ay, but let them yield things conducive to peace too. For the peace of the church doth not lie in this, that none must be suffered in anything to differ from it. Peace doth not consist in this, that many persons truly godly must stand out, and be deprived of worship and ordinances, for fear of displeasing them by entering into separate congregations, which they cannot endure to see. Peace doth not consist in paying such a reverence to a church, that all who dissent from it must forbear meeting apart for religious worship. No, let us truly follow the apostle's direction: Rom. xiv. 19, 'Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.' And from hence, these are the great things which may be complained of in the case.

1. That some persons think peace to lie only in men's quietly not enjoying ordinances in separate congregations, as if there were no way to peace but this. But there is another way of peace, in bearing with men notwithstanding their different practices and judgments. The one man keeps a day which another doth not, yet peace may be preserved between them both, and

this is the peace to which Christ exhorts us. It is not as if there were no other way but this; if you cannot be of our mind, and if you will not enjoy the ordinances in communion with us, you must fly out of the land for them!

2. While they are so urgent for peace, they forget what follows, Rom. xiv. 19, that we should mind such things whereby one may edify another. If their claims for peace would hold, yet they run away but with half the apostle's rule, whereas all of it should be taken in. These dissenting Christians should have the Lord's supper (which they scruple to receive in your parishes) for their edification; for it is that whereby they are to be built up, and we are to please our neighbour for his edification. Yea, this is of far greater moment to each saint than that dull tyrannical peace which is aimed at by a coercive power. If, indeed, those to whom forbearance is used disturb the public church assemblies, and would hinder them in the ordinances, let them have the due reward of their turbulency, for such behaviour is contrary unto peace indeed. But men might have peace, and others by them, and among them might have peace, true, everlasting peace, if they could quiet themselves in Christ's rule for forbearance.

All the apostles, when they were alive, could not persuade one Jew, though a believer, to disclaim the continuance of the Jewish ceremonies. Peter himself, and James, were of the mind that they should cease (as appears from Acts xv.), and yet they could not persuade the Jews to relinquish them. This was a tried business, and in the highest supposition of apostolical power and authority; and what authority is there then now upon earth sufficient to persuade men's consciences, when the apostles themselves could not do it in a case of like nature? The apostles professed that they had power given only for edification, and not for destruction. And what greater destruction is there than by outward compulsion, and utterly ruining men, to tempt them to break their consciences, or against their consciences to refrain religious assemblies for worship and enjoyment of ordinances in them, which is the food of their souls? Is not this expressly contrary to the apostle's direction: Rom. xv. 1, 2, 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification'? Truly, I will not now ask by what authority they would do these things, but I would ask by what charity do they these things? Why should they lay any godly person under that necessity, that he shall not have the sacrament unless he takes it in their way? Why should they tempt a man to act against his conscience in one thing, to have the enjoyment of it in another? What a terrible thing is this! Rome bears with their children more, by suffering them to differ in a thousand things.

3. If they proceed in making laws against us, let us go to law with them. Let us plead Christ's law, and let us in prayer urge him that he would put his own law in execution. Let us pray to him, that he would cause his law to stand and take place. It is very seasonable to do so. Why may we not thus, in appeals to Christ by prayer, go to law with them? We have a more ancient law, a special law of Jesus Christ, who is the great lawgiver, and who hath the executive power, even all power in heaven and earth; and hath he not laid it at stake, for the maintaining of his ordinances and worship to the end of the world? And he is our advocate to plead his own law and our cause; and heaven and earth shall pass away before the least tittle of his law shall fail. No, it shall all be accomplished in the world; and he will shake heavens and earth but he will do it. Methinks this should afford a very great deal of strength and help to our faith, that we may go to God and Christ and plead this law, this, his own law, unto him. Yea, it is not

his law only, but we have his oath and covenant annexed. He hath sworn unto us to this purpose: Luke i. 73–75, 'The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

1. There is a judgment acknowledged and confessed in the case, and (as you know) execution, if sued out, is to follow. In the year 1640, when some would bring in bowing to the altar, what was then pleaded in the canon? It was this: 'Let not him that is strong despise him that is weak; and let not him that is weak judge him that is strong.' This is a judgment passed to prove all that I have said.

2. We must also bring them and our case to an appeal in the day of judgment, for thither the apostle brings it: Rom. xiv. 10, 'But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' The apostle urgeth upon them the observance of this law of love and peace, as they will answer it there.

THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST,

SET DOWN BY WAY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, WITH AN EXPLANATION AND APPLICATION OF THEM.

Quest. What is the church of the New Testament?

Ans. The church of God is a mystical body, whereof Christ is the head.

Explicat. The church is here described by four arguments: 1st, By the *genus* or kind; it is a mystical body. 2dly, By the subject of it; that is, the head, the members, saints. 3dly, A form and essence by which it is a church; there may be a company of saints which have Christ for their head, and yet want fellowship. Now that which makes them a church, and distinguishes them from other churches, is this uniting into one congregation by holy covenant; the form giveth essence and distinction. All churches* have Christ for their head, and are saints by calling; but that which makes us differ and makes us to be this church, is this covenant which we have made with God, to submit ourselves to God's ordinance in this company. This giveth the life and being to a particular church. 4thly, The end why we are thus united and knit together; and that is, to worship God, and that concerneth God; another concerneth us, that he may bless us, and we may edify one another in all his holy ordinances. This is the nature of a church.

I. For the first, the church is a body; that is the proper kind of the church. To say a company or number, is too general a word; but it is a body that we are in, knit together to one kind of employment, which every company is not fit to do. The church is a body, Eph. i. 22, the church is Christ's body, Eph. v. 23; Christ is the head of his church, the Saviour of his body, Rom. xii. 4, 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28. Now this word *body* doth imply in it three things, which concur to the nature of a body.

1*st*. A body consists of variety of members, of several offices and uses, but sufficient to serve to the subsistence of the whole person. There is no living body but consists of variety of members; so it is with the church, 1 Cor. xii. 14–20, the members have several offices, Rom. xii. 5, 6, every member hath his different gift, and by the use of them they are able to minister supply to the whole body.

2*dly*. A body doth not imply only this, but a fit communion and combina-

* Qu. 'Christians'?—Ed.

tion of these members together; they are joined together in order, Eph. iv. 15, 16. Therefore a church is of such members that can fitly join and be joined, whose spirits can well close and make sweet concert; yea, can better suit with those of their own body than of another, Col. ii. 19. The body is knit by joints and bands, for so the church is compacted together in a proportionable frame with joints and bands.

Quest. What are those joints and bands that make members so knit together and firmly joined, that you may as well break a bone in the midst, as break them?

Ans. The body is great, Christ is the head, therefore the bands must be such as knit us to him, and one to another. Eph. iv. 4, 5, there the apostle tells you what they be.

First, One body, one spirit with Christ, and one spirit one with another; not only that we have all a spirit of grace, of faith and love, for so have all the true members of every church, but a natural disposition of heart, that may fitly join together as much as may be; and this makes them one body.

Secondly, One faith, by which we all look to Christ for grace to perform our duties, and for acceptance of them. This faith knits to Christ, and also knits us together.

Thirdly, One love, which is the bond of perfection, Col. ii. 14; some more love which God calleth me to bear to the members of my own body than the members of another.

Fourthly, One covenant, and the seals confirming that covenant. 1 Cor. x. 17, we are one bread; one bread combines us more to one body, and so doth baptism, 1 Cor. xii. 13. As for that covenant which made a Gentile when he came on to grace to partake with the Israelites in the ordinance of God, it was entering into covenant, and having a place in God's house, Isa. lvi. 4, 6, 7. But now I speak only of the covenant, as that which makes them one body; but more of them when I come to the formal part of the church.

But this is not all, for the apostle saith we are knit *by* joints, not *in* joints. The Spirit knits, and faith knits, but what makes them fall into joints? This is done by mutual submission. What makes the thigh fall into the knee? There is an hollow in the knee, into which the thigh shoots itself, and is there joined. That which joins us together in a church is submission, Eph. v. 31. They that cannot well submit to one another are not well joined; so the bands of the church must be whole, of one spirit, of one faith, &c. Thus you see a body must be joined together by bands and joints that they may close one with another, and can fall down and yield one to another, either in admonition or reproof.

3dly. The third thing in a body is the ministering of mutual help and supply from one member to another, for the health and growth of the body, so that we cannot be without one, 1 Cor. xii. 21–23. You will say, Hath Christ need of us? Yea, for he is the head of the body; and if he will be a king, he must have his subjects, for this is the glory of a king, and serveth much to his supply. Though Christ would be happy without us, yet if he will be the head of the church, as every member receiveth something from him, so it adds something to him, to the beauty of the body, Eph. i. 23. The church is 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' Christ were empty were it not for the church, as the head without the body. When you have a church, then you have a full Saviour and advocate; the church fills up his mystical body. His divine and human nature need it not, but the mystical body needs it; therefore the apostle calleth the church *Christ*, because Christ and the church are one body, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Christ is pleased to say he stands in need of us, yea, of his poorest servants, to receive grace from him,

and that he might pour it out upon them. As a woman with full breasts stands in need of a child to suck them, so Christ is so full of grace and comfort, that if he have not his weak ones to suck grace from him, his bowels ache within him; therefore he called to the weak and thirsty, Mat. xi. 28; Isa. lv. 1, 2. 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace.' As the head thus communicates to the body, and the body adds to the head, so every member adds supply one toward another. We can want no kindly member of the body, but the body will be sensible of it, Eph. iv. 16; every part hath some measure of spiritual life, and so they can be helpful and useful one to another, and thereby they grow up according to the increase of God, Col. ii. 19. One member of the body derives nourishment from another, till it comes to the lowest member of all; so the members of Christ draw grace from him, till it stretcheth to the lowest, the lowest servant, the lowest skirt of his garment. This is the third thing in a body; the members of it safeguard and preserve that body. And thus you see why the church is called a body. The church is not only a body, but a mystical body, Eph. v. 32. It is not the natural but mystical body of Christ; Christ is such a body as is secretly knit to him by one Spirit. This is a great mystery, saith the apostle: first, that the church should be framed out of the side of Christ, as Eve out of Adam's bone; for such is the church. So is his comparison. All that have been brought home to Christ, have been brought home by the preaching of Christ and his death. 2dly, The desertion of a man's father and mother, and all outward comforts, to cleave to Christ, this is a great mystery. 3dly, They should be one flesh; and union with Christ is a great mystery. There is a shadow of it in civil marriage, but it is a great mystery; for this body is a spiritual body.

¶ II. Now to the subject of this church, first, Christ is the head of it, Eph. v. 23, and i. 22. Reasons.

1. In regard of eminency of place therein. He is above all the members in place and power.

2. As the body receives from the head motion, sense, and reasonable life, so have we all our spiritual life and motion, all our grace, from Christ as our head.

3. As the head guides the body which way it pleaseth, and the body is ready at its command, so every member of the body of Christ is ready to move or go at his appointment and command.

Secondly, The members be saints, 1 Cor. i. 2, Col. i. 2; Acts ii. 47, 'such as shall be saved.' And the reason is, because it is meet the head and the body should be proportionable. What proportion is there between a leaden heel and golden head?

Use 1. If the church of Christ be a body, then it is necessary that in the body of the church the members should be of different gifts and growth. 'If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?' An hundred apostles could not make a church standing as apostles, 1 Cor. xii. 24, 29. The church must be a body; there must be some distinction, as much as is requisite to the being of a body. An hundred hands will not make a body, therefore conceive this necessary to a church, as also how unwieldy a work the fabric of a church is.

Use 2. If a church be a body, then you see what we ought to be: to be of one spirit, of one love, to be willing to submit the one to the other in the Lord, that we be careful to grow up in all things to the mutual helpfulness of one another. The name of a *body* is of strong instruction, to teach us what we ought to be. When saw you one member of the body fall out with

another? but they are sensible of the joy and grief of each other. Therefore be of one spirit, and build up one another in love.

Use 3. The name of a *body* binds us from easily starting one from another. If a member hang by a loose skin, it is no trouble to cut it off; but if it be fast on, it will be a great grief to the body; therefore there should be weighty reasons for dis-jointing one from another. May not a man then remove himself, or may the church keep a man in the body, or let him go at their pleasure? I answer, Neither of both, 1 Cor. xii. 18. If they be members, they must see that Christ dismiss them; but if they will fall off, it is a sign they did hang but by a loose skin, and then the church will be no great losers by the departure of such from them.

Use 4. Is Christ the head of the church? Then the pope is not the head of the church. An headship is applied to Christ; for if the pope be the head of the church, then the church is the body of the pope, which no papist durst ever say to this day. Now these two stand relative. Princes are said to be the head of the church, as Saul to be head of the tribes, that is, only in regard of eminency or place, that they be to see all the members of the church do their duty.

Use 5. Is Christ the head of the church? Then if any man want wisdom, direction, or comfort, where should he have it but in our head? The head must supply all to the members.

Use 6. Also it teacheth us to be subject unto Christ, as the church is to Christ her head. When the head calleth for anything, make no difficulty of it, be willing to be led and guided by him.

Use 7. It is comfort to every poor member of Christ, that surely Christ cannot but be sensible of my estate. If Christ be our head, then the least toe cannot be trodden on but the head feels it. Acts ix. 4, Saul cannot persecute a member of Christ but he persecutes Christ; Isa. lxiii. 9, He is merciful to us, and his soul is grieved for the miseries that befall us, Judges x. 16.

Use 8. If the members of the church be saints, then you see what manner of persons they ought to be that offer themselves to the church, and whom the church receiveth. They must be faithful brethren, such as shall be saved, such as are knit to Christ by one spirit; and when they have given themselves to Christ, then let them give themselves to the church. To have a golden head and wooden leg is a dishonour to the head.

Use 9. If members be saints, then you see what God calleth us to be. A *saint* implies to be set apart from all unclean uses; they are devoted to God's ways, to the building up of his kingdom. This God calleth us to be, as to be members of Christ, so to be saints.

And now to the form and essence of the church, to which also belongs the end, as the subject-matter doth to the kind. The form is that which distinguisheth it from all other assemblies and churches; for when it is said, *united into one congregation*, it distinguisheth it from the church of the Jews, which was a national church; from the catholic church, which never in this world meets in one congregation; as also from the diocesan church and family church. That they are knit into covenant distinguisheth one congregation from another; that they meet to worship God in all his holy ordinances, this distinguisheth them from all other assemblies that may be. Godly men may meet in one place for civil ends; the church therefore to which God hath given pastors and teachers is united into one congregation that meets in one place, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, and xi. 18, 20. When they come together in one place, then they make up a church assembly; it must be a place of no bigger compass and latitude than that all may hear and be

edified, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 31. To this church Paul commendeth the excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian, 1 Cor. vii. 4. To a church that may meet in one place, Christ biddeth us 'tell the church,' that is, one congregation. The apostle never calls the Christians of a whole nation one church, but when there are many congregations in a nation or country, then he terms them many churches, Gal. i. 22, 1 Cor. xvi. 19, Gal. i. 2; therefore he styles them churches because they meet not all in one place, Rom. xvi. 4, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. He doth not call them the *church* of the saints, but the *churches*, and there is a double reason of it.

1. It is taken from the duty that lieth upon the church in the New Testament to take up offences amongst brethren: Mat. xviii. 17, 18, 'Tell the church,' saith Christ. Now that is not a family church; for what hath one family to do to judge another? It is not the catholic church, for they never meet but representatively, and they cannot hear all the offences of private brethren; neither can it be a national, diocesan, or provincial church, for a whole nation or province cannot meet for one brother's offence; therefore by *the church* is meant the congregation that meets every Lord's day, and it is easy for them to hear and heal all the offences that fall out in a week. To that church Christ speaks, 'Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.'

2. And from the silence of God in the New Testament touching all national meetings and provincial and diocesan meetings; for if God had appointed such a church, he would have appointed national and provincial meetings. In the church of the Jews, which was a national church, they were at the least three times in the year to meet all together, and there were national offices and sacrifices to be offered only at those times. The high priest had a peculiar place, therefore Christ would have appointed national officers and meetings, and national and provincial worship, if he had appointed such a church. Some will say he hath left primates and metropolitans, &c., but he hath not set down the offices and duties of such men, there is a deep silence of all these things; therefore the church of the New Testament is a congregational church, that may meet in one place.

Use 1. A just refutation of all that platform of churches that antichrist brought into the church, and with the church came in to make way for him; for if the church be a congregation, it may meet in one place. Then national, provincial, and diocesan churches are such that the apostles never heard of in the New Testament; they are therefore the inventions of men's brains, and so an image set up, and contrary to the second commandment. If it should be said to us, You are a few scattered churches, were it not fit to have transcendent officers for unity's sake, to prevent schism and factions? I answer, It was intended for that end, but that which was intended for the benefit of the church hath brought contentions into the church, hath made way for ambition and secular pomp, for shouldering out of God's ordinances and godly men. Hath God therefore appointed no such things as national churches, national meetings, and worship? Then let us entertain no thoughts of them.

Use 2. From hence take the limits of the power of church officers, how they may proceed as far as the congregation reacheth, for the church is a congregation, therefore from hence will fall to the ground non-residence, that one man should have many churches under him, one in one country, another in another country. Such walk beside the rule; for if God hath ordained more officers to one church than one, and not more churches to one officer, then one man may have no more but one church under him. The apostle left more officers in one church than one: Philip. i. 1, 'With the

bishops;' that is, the pastors, teachers, and elders. No pastor or teacher but he is the pastor or teacher of one congregation, and no more, Acts xx. 7, 28. God hath many overseers to one flock, not committed many flocks to one overseer; therefore non-residency is against the rule of Christ.

Use 3. Hence see the irregular proceedings of such as take upon them ecclesiastical jurisdiction over many churches, over a thousand congregations, over a whole province or nation, or the whole world, as the pope doth: for Christ left every church his own officers to rule the same.

Use 4. Also this is for refutation of those that think parishes are distinguished, not by divine institution, but human. Indeed, that the circuit of so much land shall maintain the minister, and all that live within such a compass of ground shall be of such a congregation, this is of human invention, against the commandment of God: but this is of divine institution, that the church exceedeth not the bounds of one congregation, of such a latitude that all may hear, and all may be edified. And as for those that are admitted into the church, this is divine; for the Lord admitteth all into the church, 1 Cor. xii. 18, that willingly offer themselves to subject themselves to the ordinances of God. Therefore the church is of divine institution.

III. Now the next thing is, that they are joined together in one congregation by holy covenant. First, to prove this by grounds out of Scripture, and then by reasons.

1. The first direction and institution of a church was by a covenant. The Israelites made a covenant with the Lord, and he with them, Deut. v. 2, and from that time they were called a church, Acts vii. 38; there they promised they would do all the Lord had said, and be obedient, Exod. xxiv. 3, 7. There was another covenant made with them, Deut. xxix. 12, &c.; this was a covenant of grace, as the other was of works, vers. 10–12. The Lord entered into covenant with them that day, and with their children. By a covenant he takes them to be his people, and to be their God. Some of them were in covenant with God before, as Moses, Joshua, &c., but when they became a national church, then they made a popular covenant with God and their own selves; and there is the same reason of a national and congregational church. The stranger that would be of that church must lay hold of the covenant with them, Isa. lvi. 47. Therefore, when Abraham took strangers into fellowship with his family, in which the church was, they did it by confederacy with him, which is a covenant, Gen. xiv. 23. He would not have done it if they had been idolaters; that was the sin of Asa and Jehoshaphat with Ahab. Therefore, when he took them to war with him, they were confederate in religion with him, they must come in by covenant; and then 'my horses are thy horses, thy friends my friends,' and thus all one. Thus all in the church of Israel came in by way of covenant.

2. The second ground of Scripture is taken from the restitution of a church when it is fallen, and there is the same reason of restitution as institution, by the same means it is restituted as instituted. Now, when they had ever fallen from God, or had decayed, they entered into a new covenant with God, so did they in the days of Asa, 2 Chron. xxiii. 16; so did also Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 9, 10; so in the days of Joash, when it had been broken by Joram and Athaliah, 2 Chron. xiii. 16; so did Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31, 32. Thus a church is restored to its purity, by renewing of its covenant, Ezra x. 3, 5, 12, 19, and Neh. x. 29. They all clave to the Lord and to their brethren, with their nobles; and therefore there was a register

kept of them that entered into covenant, Isa. iv. 3, they were written, &c., Ps. lxxxvii. 6; therefore they that could not shew their father's house in the genealogies were put out, unless they would make a new covenant, Ezra ii. 59.

3. The third ground from Scripture is taken from the apostle's preface in the New Testament: Acts ii. 42, 'They continued,' &c. The word signifies, they joined and cleaved together; and this you see more plain in Acts v. 13; none durst join themselves, that is, glue themselves to the church; and it is the same word which Christ useth about man and wife, Mat. xix. 6. Now, how doth a man cleave to his wife but by mutual covenant? No other ways. That being wanting or broken, breaks and dissolves; that being maintained and kept, keeps a church; but the covenant being wanting or broken, breaks a church; therefore the covenant being made and kept, makes and keeps a church in its institution. Ezek. x. 10, 14, there is a description of the breaking of the church of Israel. Christ had two staves, and when he had broken the first, that was his covenant he had made with his people, and they with him, and that was the presence of Christ in his ordinances, which is his *beauty*. When you may go and hear the scribes and pharisees, and be never the better, then Christ is gone; their souls loathed him, and his soul loathed them; but the other staff was afterwards broken *bands*, and that was the covenant between God's people and the scribes and pharisees; and those that had a name to be of Israel, and were not true Israelites, God broke brotherhood between them. He broke it in the death of Stephen, and the persecution following, and thereby severed his faithful people from amongst them, so that they were forced for to leave the temple and the worship, and then they turned to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 46, and then they ceased to be a church. Now, then, if the breaking of the covenant break the church, then the making of it constitutes a church; break the covenant with Christ, and you shake the foundation of the church. The poor of the fold began to perceive that Christ had left them, when he spake not in the scribes and pharisees, but when he breaks the brotherhood, then the church is quite broken; therefore, this being held, held and maintained a church together. If this held in the Old Testament, it will in the New. These things were so plain to the Jews in the Old Testament, that they made no question but that in the New Testament the children should be admitted as the parents were. Therefore you read little of the baptism of the infants; but it was clear, that if the fathers and their seed were then received into the covenant by the seal of circumcision, then in the New Testament they were to be received by the seal of baptism, Col. ii. 11, 12. So that in the New Testament you read of nothing but of the joining and gluing to the church; and as man and wife were joined by marriage covenant, so were they joined together by covenant in church fellowship. These be the grounds from Scripture: now for the reasons.

Reason 1. First, it is taken from the nature of a church. As God styles it in Scripture, it is called the spouse and queen of Christ, Eph. v. 23, 31, 32, Cant. vi. 8. Now, wherein doth a queen differ from a concubine? A queen enters into the bed by covenant, but a concubine is taken in by power, as Jacob took his maid. Prov. ii. 17, the wife is said to forsake the covenant; therefore, if the church be a spouse, she must enter in by covenant. Two things go to a queen-like state: 1, she enters in by covenant; 2, she hath the keys of the family, and rules the affairs in it; but a concubine hath neither; so a true church hath both these. She is called 'the city of the living God,' Heb. xii. 22, Eph. ii. 19; the members of the church are citizens. Now citizens enter into a covenant together to keep the laws and maintain

the liberty of the city, therefore the church is a city, must enter in by covenant.

2. From the power of the church to call her own officers. Acts i. 26, the church called Matthias, he was numbered; the word signified by common voice and suffrage they accepted him, συγκατεψηφίσθη. So were the deacons chosen by lifting up of hands, Acts vi. 5; the word και ἐξελέξαντο, signifies they are chosen by lifting up of hands. Now the church doth not call her officers to an annual place, but constant, Zech. xi. 17, Deut. xii. 19, they must not forsake the Levite, nor the Levite them; the very calling of a minister to the employment of the ministry is an essential covenant, though something more implicit. An officer should not thrust himself upon a body, for then he maketh her a concubine, not a queen. Now, then, if he must be chosen by full consent, then he hath no authority over them that will not submit themselves to him, and therefore cannot do any act of power, as administer the sacraments and church censures, to those that do not call him to the work; therefore there must be a covenant.

3. From the power of the church over her members. She hath power to admonish them; and if they hear her not, then to exclude them. Now she hath nothing to do to judge those that are without the church, but those that are joined to the church, 1 Cor. v. 11, 12.

4. From the end and use of the sacraments. One end is to seal up church-fellowship, 1 Cor. xii. 13, and x. 18; therefore church fellowship standeth by church covenant, because they are the seal of the covenant.

Use 1. Reproof of those spirits that look at church covenants as a human invention. Abraham will not admit any to fellowship with him but by covenant. The church of Israel enters by covenant, and is by covenant restored; by covenant the church of the New Testament is the city and spouse of Christ, therefore there must be a covenant.

Use 2. You see how we have cause to be humbled if we sit down anywhere, and enjoy the church privileges without church-fellowship by a covenant.

Use 3. Learn we a true estimation of churches, and discretion in judging of them. By how much any church is more faithful in the covenant, the truer and more pure the church is. Hath any church power to choose her own officers, and the power to govern the church? Then such are pure churches, but else they are defiled, and are but concubines. How should we, therefore, be humbled for our brethren, that are forced like concubines, enter not into covenant before the Lord and one with another, according to his will!

Use 4. A just apology for such ministers and others that dare not administer any ordinance of God to such as offer not themselves to enter into covenant with the church. A minister may not obtrude himself upon any; if they call him not to be their minister, he may not dispense any censure or act of power to them; therefore it is not an act of schism in the church or minister, but in those that so withdraw themselves; they thereby make themselves incapable to have any ordinance of power to be dispensed to them. Ministers have no power but where they are called, and they are not but where there is a willing people. If men will not have the church to rule over them, God compels none, though he commands it; and therefore neither may the church. 2 Cor. ix. 13, they thank God for their professed subjection.

Use 5. Hence see the essential difference of one congregation from another, the difference of the covenant; they enter into covenant with officers and members, and this distinguisheth them.

Use 6. This may teach the necessity of constancy in church fellowship. It is a covenant of God, and God hath a part in all covenants, between man and wife, prince and people, but especially in all holy covenants; therefore they may not depart the one from the other, but God must part them. God hath set us in the church by virtue of a covenant, therefore we must have God's leave and the church's leave to depart, if we will depart in God's fear. Unless God dispose of it, a member may not depart, nor the church dismiss him; there is a tripartite covenant: God is one party, the member another, the church the third. Now, as I have God's leave to come in, so I must have his leave to go out.

Use 7. To such as desire fellowship with the church, to exhort them, first to enter into covenant with the Lord, and then to make a covenant with the congregation. If any man offer himself to the church, and the church defer his entertainment, his very looking towards God's temple is an ordinance, and God will accordingly bless him: the desire of an ordinance before God is accepted as well as the enjoyment. Every stone was hewn before they came to be laid in Solomon's temple. The chiefest work, the work of regeneration, should be wrought before he enters into the church; the conversion of men is not proper to the members of the church, but to children.

Use 8. Comfort to us that are knit together in holy covenant, therefore stand fast in his liberty, Gal. v. 1. It is an unspeakable mercy, and for ever to be acknowledged to God's praise; therefore, though they do abandon us, we should have a care of them that are entered into covenant with us.

IV. Now the end of this uniting together in covenant is to worship the Lord, and to edify one another in all his holy ordinances, 1 Cor. v. 4; 'When you are met together in the name of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xiv. 26, all must be done to edification. This is the end of all church meetings; but of this more hereafter.

Obj. But then, where doth contribution take place? It is neither the worship of God, nor edification.

Ans. It is both God's worship, and an act of edification; it is not only a Christian duty, but it tends to edify. Philip. iv. 18, the succour of our brethren is an acceptable sacrifice to God, and that was edification to Paul, for 'by this,' saith he, 'I am full, and abound,' and so he was quickened to his work; Heb. xiii. 16, 'With such sacrifices God is well pleased,' and hereby the bowels of the saints are refreshed, which is one part of edification; Philem. 7, 'And,' saith he, 'we have great joy and consolation,' which is also edification; therefore it is not only a carnal affection that is helped by contribution, but spiritual edification.

Reas. Herein the church differs from other assemblies, that may be godly men, and may meet in one place and be in covenant; for so may a commonwealth, but a church always meets for spiritual works.

Use 1. To teach us to do all our outward works in a spiritual manner, to give to our brethren to refresh their bowels, to increase their joy, to quicken them in the work of the Lord.

Use 2. Learn what is the end of all our meeting and all our confederacy; all is to worship the Lord, and to edify one another in God's holy ways. Some think the assembly of God's people to be factious, but, saith Tertullian, *Congressus piorum non factio dicendus est, sed curia;* let there therefore nothing be done in the church but that which tendeth to the honour of God and the edification of the church.

Use 3. Comfort to us, that God affords us such liberties as these be, wherein we may meet to worship, and edify one another in God's ways. It is an honourable assembly wherein Christ is the head, and every member, if he be not an hypocrite, is a younger brother or sister to the Lord Jesus Christ; and they meet not for the good of the commonwealth directly, though that be honourable, yet it is nothing to the salvation of souls, and the edifying of one another in God's fear. How, therefore, should all matters be carried? There should nothing appear but the presence of Christ, the love of Christ, the power of his grace; and then they are the most honourable meetings in the world.

Use 4. This is also comfort to us, that Christ will be our provision, protection; he is our head, and he will care for us. If we meet together and worship God, and edify one another, will he let us want and starve? Do you think Christ is so ill an husband? Would you leave your wives naked, and without provision, if you had it for them? Now Christ hath it for us, and he will not leave us without supply. Philip. iv. 19, when they had supplied him, then saith he, 'God shall supply all your wants.' And now this church of Philippi was one of the poorest churches of all; it was one of the churches of Macedonia that was in deep poverty, 2 Cor. viii. 2; yet Paul bears those record, that they only had communicated unto him; therefore, saith he, God shall do you good. Walk as becometh the spouse of Christ, and he will care for us; God will not be wanting to pour out blessings upon us, those that enter into covenant with him, and walk according to the power of it. Now you see what a church is.

Quest. What sort of members hath God set in his church?

Ans. Some of them are ministers and officers of the church, others of them are called commonly by the general name of the members, brethren, and saints; so that here are two sorts of members and two sorts of names: the name of the first, ministers and officers, the other, brethren and saints. Ministers and officers are all one, brethren and saints are all one. To prove all of them: first, for ministers, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 1 Tim. i. 12, Col. iv. 12, 2 Cor. iii. 6, Rom. xii. 7; by ministers he means elders, and deacons for officers, 1 Tim. iii. 1, 10, Rom. xi. 14, Acts i. 20, Ps. cix. 8. These two titles express one part of the church's body. The brethren and saints are distinguished from the ministers and officers; Acts xv. 22, 23, those he calls the church, ver. 22, he calls them brethren, ver. 23. All the members of the church are usually styled brethren, Rom. xvi. 23, Philip. i. 10. Those Christians that had no public offices in the church he styleth saints, Col. i. 2. Now, because God would have us give our children significant names, therefore it is likely for good reason the Holy Ghost gave these names to the members of the church, some officers and ministers, others brethren and saints. In their very names you may read the idea and platform of the church government; their very name should put them in mind of their duties, that as readily as you know your names when you are called, so you may hereby see the duties that God calls for in our several places.

1st, For ministers. This is expressed by two words in Scripture: the first is ὑπηρέτας, 1 Cor. iv. 1; let men esteem of us as under-rowers, the ministers carry an-end the ship of the church. Now, what doth this hold forth unto us? It holds forth thus much, that ministers are called to be rowers and under-rowers to Christ. This text will lead ministers by the hand to see what God requires of them, that they should labour one way and look another way, and yet both without hypocrisy. A rower, which way soever he rows, he looks contrary: if he be for to row westward, he looks eastward. And did you ever hear a minister preach damnation in his words,

and see him look as though he would carry all his hearers to hell? It is true, it may be he looks so, but now he rows a clean contrary way to that. And you would think he did respect the way to everlasting happiness, that he would advance you to them when he delivers you all delicacies and comfort; you would think his intent were to advance you to the highest heavens, and so it is; but withal he labours a quite contrary thing, his course is quite contrary to that he looks. When he doth most exalt you, then he doth but abase you; it is to make you the more humble, James i. 9, 10. You will sometimes think a minister speaks with much authority and sternness, and yet doth he serve you in all meekness of Christian wisdom and humility of mind. Paul saith he did, Acts xx. 18, 19, when yet he charged them with all authority, and when he beseeches you to receive grace; when he moves and persuades to avoid any evil, then doth he come with all authority and rule over you with power. These are compact together, and that without sin; and what is said of one minister is said of all, that is, pastors and teachers. This is the first thing implied in the word minister, that is, an under-rower.

2dly, The word minister signifies a servant. Joshua was Moses's minister, his servant that waited on him; so are all the apostles, elders, and deacons. The word deacon signifies a minister.

First, They are ministers to Christ, Rom. xv. 16. Now, they are his servants, 1, because they deliver nothing, nor speak nothing to the church, but the commands of Christ; they do nothing nor speak nothing but what they have received from Christ, Mat. xxviii. 20. 2. They work for his end and for his glory, and make it a transgression of their ministry to do otherwise, Philip. ii. 21, 22, Gal. i. 10; then they are ministers to Christ indeed.

Secondly, They are ministers and servants of the church: Rom. xvi. 1, 'Phebe, a servant of the church;' 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'We preach ourselves your servants;' and 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Wherein are the ministers the church's servants? Are they not called rulers? *Ans.* Not in the same respect they are ministers. The calling of a minister is a mystery; they look one way and work another, and yet dissemble neither way. But as they are servants, their service to the church stands in these things: 1. They come at the church's call; this is one part of their service to the church: Acts xvi. 9, 10, 'Come into Macedonia and help us,' whence they gathered the Lord called them. Hence God hath ordained the church to call her own officers, for the man came in the church's name: 'Come and help us.' It is a point of service to come when a man is called. 2. They go upon the church's errand; that is a point of service, Mat. viii. 9. It is our Saviour's rule, 'He that is sent is not greater than he that sends.' So then herein lies their service, they come when the church calls them, and go when the church sends them, John xiii. 16. Paul saith he was sent by the church, and the church chose another to go with him. 3. They submit themselves to the church's censure, Col. iv. 17; and if they will not hear an admonition, they may deal further with them. Peter himself must not judge others, but the church, and they must also judge him; this is the service of ministers to the church.

Thirdly, The third thing wrapped up in the name of minister is, that he is a dispenser, Gal. iii. 5, 11. Rom. xv. 16, 'He hath made us able ministers of the gospel,' that is, dispensers of it by the Spirit.

1. Therefore it lieth strongly upon their consciences to know and practise that which is a main part of their calling: never to think they have done this ministry till they have dispensed the Spirit with the New Testament and the gospel, 2 Cor. iii. 6. This makes the work too heavy for men and angels,

that they must minister the Spirit; not only the word, but the Spirit, saving knowledge. This is the main weight of duty that lies upon a minister, not to dispense ceremonies, shadows, rule, and pomp; but if we run without the Spirit, we run without our errand, and we have not fulfilled it except we leave the Spirit behind us in the hearts of the people. 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,' Isa. lvii. 19, speaking of the ministers of the New Testament. This is therefore their principal work, to be dispensing a spirit of peace, a spirit of power, a spirit of love, a spirit of meekness, and of zeal, and of humility, and whatsoever savours of life. Thus they are called to the work, therefore they are called stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

2. This therefore teacheth us ministers to be faithful, for so must dispensers be. They must tell all their errand; and not only fill them with words, but with the characters of the Spirit also, if it be possible. 2 Cor. ii. 16, 'Who therefore is sufficient for these things?' to be a savour of life; therefore it is not all the learning in the world that will make a man sufficient to dispense a spirit of life and darkness. 'Who is sufficient?' Are not you, Paul? No, not Paul; for for him to give the Holy Ghost is far from him, but he keeps his heart in frame, and is faithful, that Christ may breathe in his ministry.

3. This will carry some respect back again from the people to the minister, in regard he is a dispenser to them, 1 Cor. ix. 11. Now, for this word *officer*, it signifies two things, and that God styles them: 1. It signifies a charge, Acts i. 20, Ps. cix. 8. The word in the original is properly charge, and so it is translated Isa. lx. 17. 'Necessity is laid upon me to preach,' 1 Cor. ix. 16;' 'Thou shalt give Joshua a charge,' Num. xxvii. 23. It implies authority, Ps. cix. 8. That word implies authority, therefore the officers are called rulers, 1 Tim. v. 17. God hath left governors in his church, 1 Cor. xii. 28; 'Obey them that have the rule over you,' Heb. xiii. 17. But if they be servants, how then can they be rulers? This is the mystery. The rulers of the church are the church's servants, and the servants of the church are the church's rulers. *Ans.* There are three things in which lies the authority of their office: 1. In dispensing of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, Titus ii. 15, either in exhortation, doctrine, or admonition, they do it with all authority: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich,' &c. 2. Though they come not on to the ministry till they are called, yet being called they have authority to call church assemblies and to dismiss them: Acts vi. 2, the apostles called the church together; Joel i. 13, 14, 'Call a solemn assembly.' They moderate matters in the assembly, give leave to others to speak, Acts xiii. 9; and they dismiss the assembly, Num. vi. 23–27. 3. These are the mouth and hands of the church, by which they execute the power of the censures; and therefore he saith he hath somewhat against the angel of the church of Ephesus, and against the angel of Pergamos and Thyatira, Rev. ii. 4, 14, 20. By the angel is meant the presbytery, and they are taxed for lack of good discipline in the church; because the church having called rulers, it lies upon them if there be any abuse in it, for they have the power to act and moderate all in it, and the church only consents to and approves what they do. If you ask, then, What is the power of the church? it is this: 1st, she calls her own officers and members; and, 2dly, she sends forth both for her service; and if any fail, she may call them to account, and censure their failings by the hand of her mouth, which are her ministers. The ministers have another power, to call the church together, to charge her there with all authority, to moderate things in it, and to dismiss it, and to execute her censures, according to God's word. The deacons also being officers, have the charge of the church's treasure, and they have power and authority

to dispense it according to the rule of Christ; and except they go besides the rule, the church breaks not in upon their office.

Now, for the word *brethren*, it argues three things: 1. That they are subject to officers, which is not service, but brotherhood: Rom. xiv. 23, 'Quartus, a brother.' 2. It is a rule over brethren; it implies a continuance in brotherly love, Heb. xiii. 1; break them, and you break the covenant. 3. A continuance of brotherly communion and fellowship, that it be not broken; except Christ break it, we may not break it, Zech. xi. 14.

That word *saints* implies two things: 1. A separation from all unclean and common use; as bread and wine, when they are set apart from common use, are said to be holy, so men, when they are set apart from lusts and passions, are then sanctified. 2. A devotion or dedication of them to God's service; as a Sabbath is said to be sanctified when it is dedicated to God.

Then let the mentioning of these names keep this whole work of discipline fresh in your hearts and thoughts; as often as you are called officers, ministers, brethren, and saints, then read your duty, and they will be a commentary whereby to know what God requires of you, your duty to himself, to his church, and one to another.

Quest. What sorts of ministers or officers hath God set in his church?

Ans. They are some of them extraordinary, as apostles, prophets, and evangelists; some ordinary, as bishops and deacons.

First, For the extraordinary officers, they are apostles, prophets, and evangelists; and these God set in his church, Eph. iv. 11, 1 Cor. xi. 28. To open these; and,

1. For apostles, they are first set in the church, 1 Cor. xi. 28. An apostle signifies as much as an angel or messenger, four benefits or privileges accompanying their calling: 1. They were messengers sent immediately by Jesus Christ; they had their calling by lively voice from him, John xx. 21. So also saith Paul of himself, that he was not 'of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ.' 2. They had an immediate charge; Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go, teach all nations;' Mark xvi. 15, 16, 1 Cor. xi. 28. The care of all the churches lay upon him; yet where God blessed his ministry, there he stayed longer, and departed from them that would not receive his doctrine. Gal. ii. 7, 8, Peter was more mighty among the Jews, and Paul among the Gentiles. Though their power were illimited in regard of the charge, yet there was a limitation in respect of effects and spiritual directions by them. Paul would have gone to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not. 3. They were guided by infallible assistance of the Spirit; the Spirit led them into all truth, Gal. i. 11, 12. Paul doubts not to say that he had laid the foundation, therefore good reason it was that they should be kept from errors, 1 Cor. iii. 10. Peter erred indeed, but his error was not in doctrine, but only in matters of fact. 4. They were endued with the power of working miracles, to confirm their doctrine, Mark xvi. 20; these things made their places extraordinary. Other ministers of the church have not the same call, the same charge, the same assistance, nor the like power. When Judas the apostle hanged himself, they had a church meeting to elect another apostle into his office, Acts i. 15, 16; but when Herod had slain James the apostle, chap. xii. 2, you read not of any other meeting to constitute another. When they slept, their calling slept with them, and were not to continue in succession; for no man was substituted in the room of James as there was in the room of Judas, but instead thereof the apostles constituted elders in every church, Acts xiv. 23. As in the Old Testament there were twelve patriarchs, and of Joseph that was cut off from his brethren there came two tribes, and so they were thirteen

in all, so when Judas fell from his office, God ordained another in his room. And, lastly, was Paul, as one born out of due time, sent by Christ himself, for to make up the number of the thirteen patriarchs of the New Testament. This was the work of the apostles, even to plant churches; the church could not call them, for they were to bring in the Gentiles, which were no churches.

2. A second sort of officers is prophets, Eph. iv. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 28; this is the second office. There were three sorts of prophets in the New Testament: 1. Those that were endued with an extraordinary gift of foretelling things to come, needful to prevent the churches' dangers, and give direction for the churches' safety; such an one was Agabus, Acts xi. 28, 29. If that danger had not been foretold, the churches would not have been ready for to send relief to the saints in Judea, and so many poor saints might have perished; but by that prophecy it was prevented, Acts xxi. 9–11. Agabus prophesied what should betide Paul at Jerusalem; this was of excellent use in those times, that so the churches might by their prayers prevent such like calamities; or else if Paul could not prevent bonds or death, then he might be prepared for such desperate discouragements, as he saith himself, I am ready to die. These gifts ordinarily now are ceased; all is written in the Scriptures, whereof we stand in need for help and direction. 2. Prophets are taken for the preaching elders of the church, so it is taken, Rom. xii. 6, 7. The ordinary preachers of the gospel are pastors and teachers, and they are called prophets. 3. Sometimes prophets are taken to mean those who have the gift of teaching and prophecy, which may be found in any member of the church; and this is not an office, 1 Cor. xiv. 31; these are not ceased in the church, but still continue in the same.

3. For the evangelists, Eph. iv. 11, who they were, is much sought after; but they were such as had not their call immediately from Christ, yet they had an immediate call from the apostles, who were extraordinary men, and had extraordinary gifts. They had their calling from the apostles, as the apostles had theirs from Christ: 2 Tim. iv. 5, 'Do the work of an evangelist;' and it is said of him that Paul would have him go forth with him, Acts xvi. 13. Another evangelist was Mark, whom Paul would not accept of to go with him, Acts xv. 37, 38; and these were called to perfect the work of the apostles, that which the apostles had begun. When they had begun to plant churches, they left the finishing and perfecting of them to the evangelists. These were extraordinary in their call: 1. That they were immediately called by the apostles, though the church sometimes joined with them, as in ordaining Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2. They were not limited to any one charge, but had many, and executed authority in divers places; and herein they differed from pastors and teachers, for the pastors are to look to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers; but evangelists stayed no longer in a place than they were entreated, which pastors needed not to be. 1 Tim. i. 3, He would not have besought Timothy to have tarried, if he might not have gone away when he pleased. Tit. i. 5, He left him for to ordain elders in every city, therefore they were not limited to one charge, or bound to stay in any one place, 2 Tim. iv. 11, 12. Thus he leaves some in one place, and some in another, and disposeth of them; for they were to perfect the work of the apostles, and not limited to any charge. 3. Some of the evangelists wrote the Gospel, as Mark and Luke, but this was peculiar to some of them; the rest of the evangelists that wrote the Gospel were apostles also. But since the apostles and evangelists went to heaven, you never heard the Holy Ghost took care to substitute any evangelists in their room; as they died, so their places died with them. Further, you read that Philip, one of the deacons, Acts vi. 5, was an evangelist, Acts xxi.

8; and then the Holy Ghost sets him apart too, for he went down to Samaria, and preached there, and the people gave heed unto his ministry, Acts viii. 5, 6; also he baptized the eunuch, which, as a deacon, he would not have done, but as an evangelist called to preach the gospel. Some, therefore, of the evangelists were immediately called by the Holy Ghost, some immediately by the apostles, some by the apostles with the church, 1 Tim. iv. 14. This office is ceased, as the callings of the apostles and prophets are. God hath of latter days given to some extraordinary gifts for the settling of churches, as Luther, Calvin, &c., having great wisdom and knowledge; but they did it not so much by virtue of office as by gifts. These are the extraordinary, apostles, prophets, evangelists.

Two sorts of officers in the church are ordinary, and they are bishops and deacons, Philip. i. 1. That these are ordinary, and that these are all, may appear by the direction of the apostle to Timothy, how to carry himself in the church of God in constituting of officers. He nameth these two, 1 Tim. iii. 1, 8, bishops and deacons. Whom doth he mean by the bishops? You may see, Acts xx. 17, with 28, 'the flock over which God hath made you ἐπισκόπους, overseers'; those he calleth elders, ver. 17, he calleth bishops, ver. 28, Tit. i. 5, 7; and the same he calleth elders, ver. 5, are called bishops, ver. 7. For deacons, see Acts vi. 2–4, the deacons for the church at Jerusalem; and Paul giveth directions to Timothy about them, and it is a perpetual charge to the church. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, with 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. Bishops and deacons must be kept to the coming of Christ in the church; not so apostles, prophets, evangelists.

Quest. What manner of persons hath God appointed to be called to the office of bishops, or (which is all one) elders in the church?

Ans. A bishop or elder in the church must be in himself blameless for holiness and righteousness, and for freedom from passions and lust, also a vigilant man, and of good behaviour. Moreover, in his family, a man of government, and good hospitality; in his name, of good report, yea, even of those that are without; and in profession he may not be a young plant, but holding fast the word of truth, apt to teach it, and able to maintain it, 1 Tim. iii. 2–7, 11; Titus i. 6–9. To open all these particulars from those texts. An elder is all one with a bishop, and a bishop with an elder: Titus i. 5, 7, 'I left thee to ordain elders, if any be blameless. For a bishop must,' &c., Acts xx. 17, 28. Therefore a bishop, in the first place, must be blameless, 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 6; for what is it to be blameless? He must be holy, and, Titus i. 8, he must be known to be holy in his service of God, just in his dealings with men, and not justly taxed for any profaneness or unrighteousness. He must give God his own, man his own, and not be blamed for the least offence; so also he must be blameless from passion and lust; he must not be self-willed, Titus i. 7; he must not be self-conceited, self-pleasing, that pleaseth himself in his fancy, and will not be drawn from it; he must not be soon angry, he must not be a striker, he must not be a brawler, 1 Tim. iii. 3. He must be free from readiness to be angry in his speeches, nor must he be ready to strike, a thought and a word, a word and a blow; thus must he not be, but blameless from them. He may not lust after wine, for that is a lust of intemperance; nor greedy of filthy lucre, for that is a lust of covetousness, 1 Tim. iii. 3, Titus i. 7, 8; he must be a sober man, and of temperate behaviour. All those vain, worthless things are reckoned under these heads, 1 John ii. 6, 7, 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.' Now when he is forbidden to be self-willed, to be angry, to be a brawler, then he is no proud person; take away self-will, and down falleth pride; through pride men make contention, Prov.

xiii. 10. He may not be blamed for covetousness, the lust of the eye, nor the lust of the flesh, intemperance and incontinency. A bishop must also be a vigilant man, and of good behaviour, 1 Tim. iii. 2; 'vigilant,' that is, watchful; a double watchfulness is required of him. 1. In respect of his own estate, that he may not put upon the church unnecessary burdens; he must be prudent, not unthrifty. 2. In a diligent observance of the state of the flock committed to him, that he may be able to apply a fit word to them in season. Also, he must be 'of good behaviour,' comely; he must not be slovenly nor rude, nor neglective to others; such a man will bring his calling into contempt, especially amongst carnal men. This would make his people neglect his counsel, therefore he must not be rude whether it be through ill-nature or ill-nurture. They should be comely-carriaged men, that they expose not their callings to contempt through rudeness or slovenliness, but that they may be fit for any company. God taketh no pleasure in compliments; for God would not have a man of a mimic behaviour, full of gesticulations and cringes, for they are not fit for men of gravity, as elders must be; they must not be like players and courtiers, but of grave and comely behaviour: this he must be in himself. Now in his family he must be, first, a man of good government; he must have his children and servants in good order; they must not be wild and unruly, nor pilferers, nor riotous, nor sturdy, nor prodigal, Titus i. 7, but faithful, but frugal, but teachable, and ingenious. He must be the husband of one wife; he must not have two, as the Jews had, nor have a second when he had put away the first for any other cause than adultery; he must have but one, and her lawfully married. 1 Tim. ii. 5, if a man cannot rule his own house, his own servants, his own children, how shall he rule other men's servants and children that are members of the church? He must also be of good hospitality, 1 Tim. iii. 2, Titus i. 8; he must be a 'lover of hospitality,' and given to it. The word in the original signifies both, that a man loveth he is given to; he taketh it for his comfort to have Christian friends in his house with him. It is his joy; he doth not harbour his brethren with grudging, 1 Peter iv. 9, he must do it freely, frequently, according to the measure of his estate God hath given him, Heb. xiii. 1, 2. Now for his good name, he must be a man of good report, even of those that are without, 1 Tim. iii. 7, that they that would slander him, and religion by him, may not be able, lest he fall into reproach, which is a dishonour to his name and to the church of God, and he falleth into the snare of the devil. While he may seek to clear himself, he may fall into passion, and brawling, and contention, or else may let a report lie upon him, and not seek to vindicate his name, and so the devil will have him on either side. He must have a good report even of those that are without, because this will first cut off occasion of slander from pagans, and also give them the better opportunity and greater encouragement to come into the church, and for that end to confer with the elders about it, for otherwise it would be a stumbling-block unto them; and if they should be well reported of by those that are without, how much more by those that are within! Finally, he may not be a new plant, a novice, one that is new come on to grace, or newly in the church, for such an one is but raw, and unsettled, and of no great experience. He must be a grave Christian, and of some standing and constancy. Titus i. 9, he must hold fast the faithful word of God, which a young plant cannot do; he must be a constant Christian and professor, that must hold fast the doctrine of truth and grace against his adversaries, Satan and his instruments; yea, he must be able to maintain that he saith, and persuade others to it: apt to teach; for though all elders teach not, yet they must be apt for it, apt to admonish, apt to teach, as they have occa-

sion. They must be able to give good reason of what they hold, and able to justify it against gainsayers. A good cause giveth a great strength to him that believeth what he saith, and practiseth what he believeth; such a man will be able to give a reason and account of his faith and government, which a gainsayer cannot resist. He must not be a young plant, for he is not a holdfast; the reason of this is given, 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' This holds forth thus much, that a young plant being called to the ministry, may be puffed up with the pride of his place, and respect done unto him from others, and so fall into the condemnation of the devil, which was pride upon the excellency of his ministry; that was the devil's fall, and the sin whereby he fell out of heaven and became a devil. God made him an angel of light; and when God had made his angels ministering spirits about his throne, they were proud of it, and thought it reflected some glory, not upon God, but upon themselves; and therefore God cast them out, and they are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The devil was not capable of the lust of the flesh, nor the 'lust of the eye,' therefore his sin was pride, or the fruits of it. Some have thought he offered to set his throne equal with his Maker, Isa. xiv. 12–14; but it is not spoken of him, but of the king of Babylon; and the text saith, 1 Tim. iii. 6, his pride was in his ministry; for pride may shew itself, as in envy of superiors, so in contempt of inferiors, or self-sufficiency and fulness in a man's self; for their envying of God we read not any footsteps of it in Scripture, but that they prided themselves in their ministry. Because they saw Adam and Eve not so glorious creatures as themselves, but that they were more remote from God, therefore they prided themselves in their ministry above Adam, and were full of themselves, and therefore would not serve and attend upon Adam; and this might be their ruin. Therefore, a man might not be a novice, lest he fall into the sin of the devil, who prided himself in his ministry about the throne, and despised Adam, to pride himself in his ministry.

Use 1. This serves to teach the church of God, when you come to choose your church-officers, whom they are to choose into the office of a bishop or elder, even men thus qualified, of such government in their families, of such a growth as hath been described; for if you walk besides the rule, you walk besides peace.

Use 2. It teacheth officers their duty, and what God calleth them to, even to be blameless, &c.; and this is your copy, this is that you are so to express, that you may not fail in any.

Use 3. To teach us what cause of due thankfulness to God we have, when God giveth us such as are in any measure conformable to this rule laid down unto us.

Use 4. To teach the children and servants of church elders to take heed of riot, of anger, of impatience, disobedience, for thereby you disable them from ruling the church. He that cannot keep in order his own family, how, then, shall he rule the church of God?

Use 5. To teach those whom God calleth to any public office, either in the church or commonwealth, to look to have their hearts not puffed up with their places; but be you humble in the ministry God calleth you to, not to be exalted above your brethren. A man is not to be self-full, but careful to receive supply from Christ, and so to go in and out amongst your people, that you may be exemplary patterns to them of blamelessness, of freedom from passions and lust, of good behaviour, of good government, that so God's work may prosper in your hands, and you may give God a comfortable account at the day of your appearance.

Quest. What sort of bishops hath God set in his church?

Ans. Two; some pastors and teachers, some ruling elders, under two heads; some labour in word and doctrine, and of those some are pastors, some teachers, others rule only, and labour not in word and doctrine.

Quest. What is the work and office of the pastors and teachers?

Ans. The work of the pastors is to attend to exhortation, and therein to dispense a word of wisdom; but the teacher's office is to attend unto doctrine, and therein to dispense a word of knowledge: Eph. iv. 11, 'God hath given some pastors, some teachers.' Now there be two places which give clear light to the difference of their work and office. The first place is Rom. xii. 7, 8: there is a teacher, which is to attend unto teaching; and an exhorter, which is to wait upon exhortation. If the teacher be to attend unto teaching, and there is besides an exhorter, then that is left for the pastor's office and work to exhort; for there are no other officers in the church now that labour in the word and doctrine but pastors and teachers. The apostle maketh them distinct officers, and they have their several works to attend unto; the teacher is not to attend unto exhortation, nor the pastor unto doctrine. The second place is 1 Cor. xii. 8: the apostle, speaking of the several gifts that God hath given to the members of the church, 'To one,' saith he, 'is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit;' and these he maketh to be given to distinct and different persons. As the gifts are different, so the persons are different. Now to which is the word of knowledge given? It is the proper object of the teacher. So he is to teach knowledge to the people, and then the pastor is with wisdom to dispense a word of exhortation. Consider what are the objects of knowledge and wisdom; the object of knowledge is truth, and the difference between truth and falsehood, and contains in it all things that are to be known and believed by Christian men, though they are not to be practised, as the knowledge of God, the state of innocency, man's fall, of the state of glory, yea, of man's sins, which are not to be practised. The object of wisdom is godliness, for wisdom ever directeth to a good end, and the means to attain it. Matters of wisdom must not only be known, but we must be stirred up and exhorted to the same; so that, when he saith, 'To one is given a word of wisdom;' that is, to discern what is best for the people of God to do, and to stir them up accordingly to it by wise motives, and inducements, and helps, as may make a Christian wise unto salvation; and for the matters of truth, and faith, and knowledge, they belong to the teacher to dispense unto God's children and people; but there are four things which are both for knowledge and practice, as what is the nature of repentance and faith, matters to be known and practised also; and so the nature of obedience, what is a virtue and what a vice; and where both these concur together, there both is the teacher to deal in teaching, and the pastor to take them up in application. Now the reason why God is pleased thus to dispense himself is, first, taken from the necessity of supplying the defects of God's people. 1. Ignorance and error lieth upon them; so God complains, 'My people perish for want of knowledge.' Now the teacher is to look that they be taught the knowledge of the Lord. 2. Folly and slowness of heart. Folly to see what is best to be done; and when we know it, we are slow to put it into practice, Luke xxiv. 25. Now here comes in the pastor's work: he teacheth them what is best to be done, and stirs them up to it; he cometh to heal their folly and slowness of heart, and that he doth by a wise and quick exhortation. Secondly, from the defect of officers themselves; for a man may be abundant and rich in knowledge, and yet cold in exhorting; and a man may be quick and lively in exhortation, and yet slow in know-

ledge; and there is a reason in nature for it, for they require a several temper of body: a man of knowledge must be of a cold temper, and an exhorter of an hot spirit; and therefore God, for the good of his church, hath provided both. There may be little light where there is much heat, and much light where there is little heat. So God's servants are some of them more full of light, and some of heat, and the church hath need of both. And thus the teacher may have need of the pastor, and the pastor of the teacher, and so like two hands they walk and help one another: 1 Tim. iv. 13, 'Give attendance to exhortation, and to doctrine;' he chargeth them with both, all extraordinary officers of the church, as apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and a Timothy, that were to give attendance to both; but he never saith so to any ordinary officer. An evangelist is as much worth as both pastor and teacher; and therefore they that have spirits for both come nigh an extraordinary officer, an evangelist; as God raised up some in the reformation of his church and people. But the apostle saith, Rom. xii. 7, 'Let the teacher wait on teaching,' &c., but the word *wait* is not in the original.

Quest. What is this the apostle would have them do, when he would have them attend and wait?

Ans. He would have this to be all their work: there they set up, there rest, they are to dwell upon them, that if you would have them, there you must have them; that though they may have to deal in sundry occasions, yet all the work of a teacher is about teaching, and of a pastor about exhortation. Now this word *applying* or *attending* implies four things:

1. They must attend to the raising of their doctrine and exhortation, and that will require their attendance to reading. For a man to raise a doctrine and not understand his text, he buildeth without a foundation; therefore he must read the Scripture and learn the sense of it, and must withal attend to the state of the people which he is to teach and exhort. Prov. xxvii. 23, he would have them know the state of their flocks: how much more should a pastor and teacher the state of their people? Ezek. iii. 17–19, therefore it is necessary for them to watch over them, Heb. xiii. 17, that they may apply a word to them according to their estates. This is the first thing: if a man either mistake the state of his text or of his flock, he will speak very impertinently to them; they must not come off with a sudden doctrine or exhortation, for that which is seasonable at one time may be unseasonable at another.

2. They must attend unto applying of their doctrine for refutation of errors, for reproof of any corruption of manners, the teacher to the one of them, the pastor to the other, for there is a difference between these two, for, saith the apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 16, the word is 'profitable for reproof, for correction,' ἐλέγχος, that is, reproof of errors; ἐπανόρθωσις, it is 'reformation' of manners, and so they urge both. The teacher presseth his doctrine from manifold scriptures and reasons from Scripture, and the pastor presseth his exhortation from sundry matters, and dispenseth sundry means, by which the duties he persuadeth them to may be performed, as also it is the duty of both of them (in special manner of the pastor) to comfort when either doctrine is believed or duty performed.

3. They must attend to the ratifying and sealing of the doctrine they teach, partly by dispensing the seals of the covenant, in which are wrapped up the counsel of God. Mat. xxviii. 19, they must baptize and teach, and therefore they that attend unto doctrine must attend unto the sacraments, to seal unto the people the doctrine they teach, partly by dispensation of the church censures together with the church; whatsoever is an act of rule, they must have a hand in it, though others join with them: 1 Tim. i. 20, 'Whom

I have delivered unto Satan;' he had a principal stroke in it, to make the church to do it, and he did it 'that they might learn not to blaspheme,' and so he ratified his doctrine, and so for the incestuous Corinthian doth mind about him, and send to the church to excommunicate him when they were met together with his spirit, and as though he was present with them, 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. Both pastors and teachers have a power to join in the church censures.

4. They must attend to the perfecting of the work they have in hand; for what is their exhortation, and doctrine, and sacraments, and censures, unless God's blessing be upon them? Therefore they must attend unto that which will perfect their work, and that is prayer; Acts vi. 4, they must attend to the ministry of the word and to prayer, that is their main work; Philip. i. 3, he never prayed but he prayed for that church, Col. i. 3, 1 Thes. i. 2, 3, 1 Sam. xii. 23. Amongst these prayers you must put in your blessings, Num. vi. 23–25; this perfects the work, for prayer opens the treasures of heaven for a blessing. They also perfect their work by their exemplary conversation, 1 Tim. iv. 12. Attendance to their own rule perfects their work they have in hand; nay, moreover, pastors and teachers must be willing to lay down their lives for the confirmation of the doctrine and exhortations they have given to their people; Philip. ii. 17, if God call, they must be willing to seal it with blood. This perfects their work.

Use 1. It is an use of refutation of a double error. Some think that the offices of pastor and teacher are all one; others think that the pastors and teachers may be distinct offices, yet not both of them needful in every congregation. Both of these are errors from that formerly delivered; for if God hath given some pastors and some teachers, and hath commanded the teacher to attend unto teaching, and the exhorter unto exhortation, then they are different offices committed to several persons; they must attend to their several works, the pastor to exhortation, the teacher to doctrine. I may have a gift for sundry matters, but I am not bound to attend to any but that which is the principal work of my calling. Some man hath a gift of prophecy: is he therefore bound to attend to that only? But when a man is bound to attend to his teaching, then that is a thing that will take up his whole work, and is his peculiar office; and so for the exhorter. But what need both these in every congregation? Doth not the apostle say God hath set them in his church? He means every particular church. It is a maimed body that wanteth an eye or some other member; so is a church unless it hath all the officers; it may be a church, but not a complete church. Hath not every church need of light and heat, and need to be taught and exhorted? The pastor and teacher hath need both to be in the church.

Use 2. To teach the officers of the church, both pastors and teachers, what is required of them in their several places, to teach, and exhort, and comfort the people of God.

Use 3. To teach the people of God, 1, not to expect the like measure of gifts from all your officers. If God hath given different guts, you should not then look that a pastor should be so ready and strong in doctrine, nor from teachers to be quick in exhortations. 2. To teach us to be sensible of our own defects. To what purpose should God give us different officers if we stood not in need of them; what need teachers if we were not dark in our understandings? If we were not slow to believe, what need we exhorters to quicken, to exhort, and comfort those that do well? Therefore, when you see your officers, you may consider your own defects in them. 3. To consider the marvellous bounty of God to us, that hath sent officers according to all our necessities. 4. To teach you what use to make of your pastors

and teachers, whom you are to choose to those places and offices. Repair to them for the word of truth and goodness according to God, that they may direct and exhort you in the ways of his grace.

Quest. What is the office and work of the ruling elders?

Ans. Seeing the kingdom of God is not of this world, but heavenly and spiritual, and the government of his kingdom is not lordly, but stewardly and ministerial, and to labour in the ministry of exhortation and doctrine is the proper work of the pastors and teachers, it remaineth therefore to be the office and work of the ruling elders to assist the pastors and teachers in diligent attendance to all other aids of rule besides exhortation and doctrine, as becometh good stewards of the household of God; as, 1, to open and shut the doors of God's house by admission of members, by ordination of officers, by excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders; 2, to see none live in the church inordinately without a calling, or idle in their calling; 3, to prevent and heal offences, whether in life or doctrine, that might corrupt their own church, or other churches also, if their counsel be required; 4, to prepare matters for the church's consideration, and to moderate the carriage of all matters in the church assemblies, as to propound matters in the church, and to order the seasons of speech and silence in the church; 5, finally, to feed the flock of God by a word of admonition, and, as they shall be called, to visit and pray for their sick brethren.

The ground of all this is laid down in Rom. xii. 8, where the apostle, besides him that exhorteth and teacheth, maketh mention of another officer that ruleth with diligence; and he is distinct from the pastors and teachers, and that is the sum of his work, to rule with diligence. Now, because this is a general word, to rule, and here it is not limited; and to bring in an illimited rule in the church might overthrow the estate of the church; it is therefore requisite to inquire what manner of rule this is. For opening of which, you hear, in answer to the question, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but heavenly and spiritual: from whence it will follow, that the rule commended to a ruling elder is not a worldly rule, not with state and pomp, nor a rule that doth inflict bodily punishment. This is the rule of worldly kingdoms. Now, as Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so is neither the rule of his kingdom. We say it is spiritual; is it then in such things as these men may dispense at their pleasure? Not so, for as his kingdom is spiritual, so is his government of his kingdom not lordly, but stewardly, Luke xii. 42. It is a stewardly office; and there the officers in the church are not said to carry the sword, as magistrates, Rom. xiii. 4: 'But to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom,' Mat. xvi. 19. The power of the sword is princely and lordly, but the power of the keys is only stewardly and ministerial; for so it was said, the keys of the house of David were committed to Eliakim, Isa. xxii. 22, and he was 'over the house,' ver. 15; which phrase of being 'over the house,' is translated properly, Gen. xliii. 19, 'steward of the house.' So we see ground laid for clearing of the office of the ruling elder; it is neither after a worldly manner, neither doth he rule with any illimited power, but he is to rule as becometh a steward in the house; not by the sword, nor by his own light and direction, but by the direction given him by the master of the house, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20; they are to teach whatsoever Christ hath commanded them. Well, then, what kind of government is this? It is not worldly,* but ministerial, dispensing the will of Christ. Is it then to attend upon the ministry of the word? We hear that to labour in that work is commended to the pastors and teachers, Titus i. 5, 17; therefore it doth remain, that it belongeth unto the office of

* Qu. 'lordly'?—Ed.

this ruling elder to assist the pastor and teacher in all other acts besides. Now the ruler's office being ministerial, look what things there be that Christ hath not made proper to the pastor and teacher, they are communicable to those ruling elders. It is with the ruling elders now as it was with the Levites, Num. viii. 19, they are given to the priests to assist them, but some things were reserved to the priests, and some things were communicated to the Levites; they had indeed the care of the doors of the tabernacle, but for offering sacrifice it was not communicated to them, but reserved to the priests only: so attendance on teaching and exhorting is the proper work of the pastor and teacher, but other acts of rule are as well communicated to ruling elders.

1. The first act of rule is, to open and shut the doors of God's house; and of them to whom the power of the keys is committed, it is generally inferred that they have power to open and shut, Mat. xvi. 19. All the members of the church have some interest in the power of keys, but it is specially delegated to them that are stewards by office, for admission of members into the church, that is, to open the doors of God's house. We read, that when Paul sent for the elders, he took his leave of them in a most heavenly sermon as ever he preached: Acts xx. 28, 29, 'Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock God hath made you overseers of,' &c. Wherein he doth lay a caveat to them to take heed to the doors of God's house; grievous wolves will be creeping in among you. This charge lies upon all the elders. And whereas it is said, 'Let him rule with diligence,' it implieth, 1, watchfulness, and then industry and fidelity to take heed; set not open the doors of the broad gates of the kingdom, to let in all that comes; as the Levites were to keep the doors of the tabernacle, that no unclean thing should come in, no unclean Israelite, no, not the king himself, if he were leprous and unclean. And this is the first part of the elders' office, to open and shut the doors of God's house, not to admit hand over head all comers whatsoever; but take heed no wolf, no hypocrite, no carnal person may come in, till they be able to give an account of their faith, to the edification of God's church. For this we shall read, that those are only members fitted for the church which are able to manifest their faith. The manifestation of the Spirit is given him to speak withal; so those that tender themselves to have fellowship with the church, though you find that they have grace, it is not sufficient presently to let them in, but tarry a while, and they will have a gift to manifest the work of grace in their souls, though such should not be too long delayed, lest they be too much damped and discouraged. 2. They have power to ordain church officers, 1 Tim. iv. 14. The hands of the presbytery are the hands of the company of elders, Acts xiv. 23; those elders are called the eldership, or presbytery, so that by the same hands that they admit some into church fellowship, others they admit into office in the church. 3. They do shut the doors of God's house, by excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders: Mat. xviii. 17, 18, 'If he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen,' &c. They are to deliver them to Satan, as Paul determined concerning the incestuous Corinthian; now the care of the whole church is, and ought to be, to see that they do not suffer among them such venomous persons as would corrupt the whole body, but in special-wise this care belongeth to the elders, some singular accounts lie upon them. Christ Jesus, writing an epistle to the churches of Asia, he doth in special reprove the angels of the churches, and those doth he blame for tolerating such things as God hateth. Now, if they be principally and properly reproved by Christ for suffering scandalous offenders, Rev. ii. 14–16, it is therefore their care to see that the church

be not scandalised with notoriously corrupted members, it lies principally upon them that are to be the guides and rulers in the congregation of the saints.

2. The power of the keys reacheth further; it doth belong to the stewards' care to see that none in the churches do live inordinately without a calling, or idle in their calling. It is the elder's office to see that no drone or unprofitable servant be in the church, which may live of other men's labours. 2 Thess. iii. 10, 11, there the apostle taxeth the Thessalonians for a double vice: some walked without callings, others were idle in their callings. And this belongeth to the elders to see to the amendment thereof; it is an act of rule.

3. A third act of the elders' office is, to prevent and heal all offences in life or doctrine in their own or other churches, Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. The angels, the officers of the church, are to see that no Balaamite, no Nicolaitane, no Jezebel, be in the church; but such they are to heal, either by admonition, or else to cast them out of the church. 2 Thes. v. 13, 14. This is the proper character of the elder's office: if warning may heal a vice, that member ought not to be cut off; but they are to be cut off if warning or rebuke heal not. The elders are to seek to heal it; for if it be not removed or reformed, it lies upon their heads: and I put it in that they are to help other churches also, if their counsel be required. Churches may require the help of other congregations to heal and remove the offence that pesters the body, if they cannot do it themselves. When the church at Antioch was troubled about the necessity of circumcision to salvation, and they could not be satisfied in it, they sent to to the church at Jerusalem apostles and elders. The apostles are not implied as extraordinary officers, but they carry all things in an ordinary course, and meet together with the church, to debate the matter with the church assembly, and there was such disputing amongst them; if they had spoken by divine testimony, what needed their disputation? The word of one apostle might have quelled all contradiction; but they send to them as to a church, and it is a precedent for other churches; and therefore, in that the elders are named, it is their care to look to such errors as arise in other churches if they be required, and it is also their duty, according to the rule of Christ, to go to other churches and deliver their minds. Acts xv. 22, there you may see that such ought to be the care of the elders, and of one church over another, as that if any church should send to them for their counsel, they are to do what they can for the redressing of errors amongst them, and they may set in order such things, and send chosen men from amongst themselves unto other congregations, as to answer by word of mouth what hath been agreed upon. This belongeth to the elder's office; but in case other churches should be careless of inquiring after the counsel of other churches, it will be the part of one church to admonish another, out of the liberty that one church hath in another, and the necessity that lies upon all to neglect no good means to preserve the household of God unspotted. But how cometh it to pass that all the churches are called one church? Mat. xviii. 18. Doth it not shew thus much, that all churches have a like power, and that all churches should have a like care over one another's good? So this was prophesied of old of the churches of the New Testament: Cant. viii. 8, 'We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts,' &c. What if a church hath no breasts? And what if she should use means, and not be able to procure breasts? What if she should be content to live without breasts, should other churches let such a church alone? The church doth complain, 'We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we do for her?' This is the mutual care that

one church should have of another; whatever defects they see a church lie under, they might labour to supply them. It was Cain's profane spirit that said, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' and it savoureth of the rancour of Cain's spirit to say, What hath one church to do with another? Is it nothing if one church want officers, breasts to give them suck? If there be in you spirits of sisters, if the blood of Christ run in your veins, you may not put off the state of other churches, as impertinent to you. It is therefore the care of elders, that are officers in the churches, for to be ready to help other churches if they do require them; and if they do not require them, yet by all means what they can to help them, and reform what is amiss amongst them.

4. That part of the officers is to prepare matters for the church's consideration, and to moderate matters in the church assembly. First, to prepare matters for the church's consideration, Acts xxi. 18. They knew Paul must come before the church, therefore they meet to prepare matters for it, that he might not raise an offensiveness in the church. When they meet together, the elders are to take care that things might be so carried that there might be no disturbance; they must so fit them that there may be little noise, and that the church's answer may be without exaggeration, contention, and disturbance; that things may be ordered with the most care, with the least offence to edification; and they are to order the seasons of speech and silence in the church. Acts xiii. 15, 'The rulers of the synagogue sent,' &c., so that they open the mouths of men, and by the same power do also shut them again. They who call for speech may call for silence; he that shutteth, he may also open; he that openeth, he may also shut. They also propound matters to the congregation, Acts vi. 3; and what the apostles did as elders, the same may also elders do. It is the elder's office to feed the flock of God with a word of admonition, for we heard before that all the elders were to be apt to teach and able to convince an adversary. Now what word doth remain for them? Not a word of exhortation nor doctrine, for that belongs to pastors and teachers; but the apostle expresseth it, 1 Thes. v. 12, 'Now we beseech you, brethren,' &c., where he distinguisheth between them that labour and them that rule: 'know them that labour among you,' that is, your pastors and teachers; and 'know them that are over you,' that is, your ruling elders. And what work do they? They rule principally by a word of admonition; that is, such a word that warneth every man in his place to take up some calling, and to be diligent in his calling, to be able to teach this or that to be lawful or unlawful. This is he both able and fit for to do, and this he ought to do according unto God, Acts xx. 31. Paul propounds his own example to them, how he ceased not to warn day nor night with tears; and this warning is a principal part of rule, and therefore when good Lot did but sadly admonish those lewd persons, Gen. xviii. 19, they said, Shall he judge and rule? So that this is the work of the elders, to admonish the church. Finally, when they are called for, they are to visit the sick brethren, and to pray over them, James v. 14, 15; being called for, they ought to speak some word of edification to the sick, and to pray over them, and God hath promised to heal them both in soul and body: 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick.' As for anointment with oil, it is not ceased, as is the gift of miracles, but it is a marvellous strong promise that is given to the prayers of the elders of the church, for the Lord did know that this ordinance would be despised; and to prevent it, the Lord doth marvellously encourage them to the use of it by the promise of this very blessing, that 'the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him;' so that it will be a wholesome medicine both to soul and body. Not that God doth promise that this shall ever be granted, for then men should

never die when they send for the elders to pray over them; but they shall find it to be a usual blessing to the honour of the elder's office, that at their prayer for the sick the Lord will raise up their estate and strength again, though it seems desperate. Thus you see the whole duty of these ruling elders, and how they are to assist the pastors and teachers in all other acts of rule besides word and doctrine.

Use 1. From hence observe the great bounty of God unto pastors and teachers, that God hath not left them alone in the church, as Martha complains to Christ that Mary had left her alone to serve. The ministers of the church have no such cause to complain, for as he gave the Levites to the priests to help them in their service, so hath he given ruling elders to such as labour in the word and doctrine, that they might have assistance from them in ruling of the church of God.

Use 2. It may serve to answer a cavil that some have against this office, who say that if God hath given these officers to the church, he would have then set down the limits of their offices, and not have sent them forth with illimited power; to which it is answered, that their power is strongly limited, as a stewardly or ministerial power and office. It is the power of the keys which Christ hath expressed in his word, and it consisteth in these things that have been spoken of God's house, to open and shut the doors of God's house by admission of members, &c. (*ut prius*). This is such a rule as is no small help to the spirits and hearts of those that labour in doctrine, and no small help it is also to the whole church of God; and when they are wanting, many evils will grow, and those without possibility of redress and amendment, much idleness, much confusion, many offences. Though other ministers have been in the church, we may see how much in the want of these officers the churches have been corrupted.

Use 3. This serveth for instruction to the elders, to shew them what bounds God hath set them in their calling, as hath been said, that so they may walk according to God in them.

Use 4. It doth enforce a duty lying upon all the members of the church, to submit themselves to them in the Lord, as becometh saints. Members ought to submit to their trial; it is no arrogancy for them to deal with those that are to be admitted into the church, to lay hands upon officers; and think it not a hard matter that they should be thus careful of setting men into their callings. It is no transgression of their bounds to prepare matters for the church, to moderate the carriage of matters in the church assembly by their wise direction, and it will be then the part and duty of the people to submit to their elders in these things. From this ground it will appear to be a swerving from the rule for men to give way to their spirits and tongues to speak in the congregetion, though their matters be good, before the door be opened by him that hath the keys, otherwise it is out of order. They ought not for to speak without the consent of the elder; and if the elder see that it tends to confusion and disturbance, he may as reasonably put an end to it, as at first he opened a door for it.

Obj. But suppose that all the elders be in the same transgression, and they will not hear any admonition; if then, before I can declare it to the church, I must crave leave of them to speak, they will not give it me, may not I then declare my grievance to the church without them?

Ans. If all the officers be in an offence, and if they will not hear thy private admonitions, then tell the church of them. If Peter himself offend, and Peter will not hear thee, tell the church of Peter. Christ alone and his church is king and judge in such a case; then doth their power return to the church from whence they first received it; but if the elders be not

delinquent, nor possessed with any sinful prejudice, then must they moderate the carriage of all matters in the church assembly, otherwise there would be no end of speaking and confusion, if every man might open a floodgate of speech when he would. And when we see further what lieth as a duty upon sick persons, that they must not neglect to send for the elders of the church, for we see how strong the promise is when they are sent for in faith, with expectation of a blessing from an ordinance, and they pray over them in the name of the Lord. And lastly, as brethren ought to receive admonition from the hand of any brother, so surely they ought not to despise it from the hand of an elder. 1 Thes. v. 12–14, there the apostle shews them how willingly and surely they should submit to such, with due attention and reformation, according to God.

Quest. What manner of men hath God appointed to be called to the deacon's office?

Ans. Men of gravity and good report, not given to dissimulation nor to wine, nor to covetousness; men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, keeping their household in good rule, having such wives as may neither dishonour nor corrupt their calling; not slanderers, but grave, sober, and faithful in all things.

Explication. This full description of the state of the deacon's spirit is expressly laid down in two places of Scripture, 1 Tim. iii. 8–12 and Acts vi. 3. First, they must be men of gravity. This word, translated *grave*, doth imply three things: 1. It is opposed to lightness. A deacon must not be light in his gestures, in his speech and apparel, but be grave. 2. It is opposed to wantonness; they must be retired, and clean from all wanton dalliance. 3. Comeliness; the word signifies reverent and venerable. He must neither be light in his own carriage, nor in the hearts of other men. The word cometh from a word that signifies to worship. He must not be light in his own disposition, nor in other men's apprehensions. Him whom you would slight is not venerable (σέμνος), which is required of a deacon. Secondly, he must be 'of honest report,' Acts vi. 3; men gravely borne witness unto, so signifies the word (μαρτυρουμένους). They must carry a good report with them wherever they are known. Thirdly, they must not be given to dissimulation, not double-tongued. In churches of great multitudes, where many are to be maintained by their hands, he may promise something to some which he may forget or not be able to perform. His word must be as his oath or vow; if it be gone out of his mouth, it must stand inviolable. He must not pretend more care for the poor than there is need, nor promise that he is not able to perform. A man is double-tongued two ways: 1, when his heart differs from his tongue; 2, when his tongue differs from his tongue at several times, when the first thing was right and true. He must not be given to wine; for so he may come to waste, not only his own estate, but the stock of the church, and that is contrary to the spirit of a steward; nor to covetousness, for that will overwork his honest heart to divert the church's stock from the church's service, and to employ it for his own ends. Therefore this is carefully to be avoided, these are his moral virtues. Now, for his spiritual endowments, he must be 'full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom,' Acts vi. 3. He must be full of the Holy Ghost, which implies, 1, that a man must be empty of his own spirit, for else he cannot be full of the Spirit of God. A vessel cannot be full of wine and water too; therefore he must be empty of every lust, and of himself. 2. He must abound in all the gifts of God's grace; and not only be full of gifts, but of the Holy Ghost himself. For gifts will grow rusty, dead, powerless, and unprofitable, and we shall turn them to our own ends; but he must be full of the Holy Ghost, not full of faith, patience, &c., but of the Spirit of faith, and full of the Spirit of God,

to put life into all his graces: 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he,' &c. It is not his gifts, but his person, Rom. viii. 11. It is not gifts that raised Christ from the dead, but the eternal Spirit. Now, then, the eternal Spirit of God must rest in the heart of a deacon. A deacon may be put to sudden expressions; and if he be not full of the Holy Ghost, he will not well rule his own gifts. The more pure any grace is, the sooner it is wrecked, unless it be carefully handled and guided according to God. A man is then full of the Holy Ghost when he doth not content himself with gifts, that he hath a gift of prayer and of edification, and a spirit of diligence, but when he finds himself still empty for all this, but as he continually desires fresh supply from the Holy Ghost. If in abundance of gifts I find myself empty, and I am sensible of my own unprofitableness and inability to do any good, then am I not only full of the gifts of God, but of the Holy Ghost, to carry them an-end with strength. 3. And this implies such a strength of grace and spirit, that it carries him above the world, above all lusts, above all temptations, all credit and reputation, and whatsoever he meets withal, and he is carried with full sail steadily and strongly to God's heavenly kingdom; whatsoever is put into his hand, he is carried an-end with speed and strength above all difficulties. 4. A man is full of the Holy Ghost when he is ready to utter spiritual things upon all occasions; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' When a man is full of the Holy Ghost, there is a law of grace in his lips. And there is reason that a deacon should be thus full of the Spirit, for many times the members may grow worldly with whom they are to deal, who then should speak a spiritual word of quickening to them; and also they are to deal with the poor and with the sick, and therefore had need to deal with their souls as well as with their bodies. Job xxxii. 18, Elihu, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, could not hold his peace, but must speak. 5. A man full of the Holy Ghost will not respect persons. A deacon will be apt to respect his kindred, or friends, or countrymen, if he be not full of the Holy Ghost. The Levites did not know their own fathers when they had sinned, and they were then full of the Holy Ghost. A man with his own stock may lawfully have respect to persons, to his kindred, &c., and ought so to do; but if it come to the stock of the church, that being in the hand of a man dedicated to God, now, his hands are the hands of God, and the hands of the church, and therefore he distributes them according to God, as if the Holy Ghost did it, not respecting persons.

And full of wisdom. There was in the apostles' time more need of wisdom, for they had the charge of all the members of the church. They had the common stock of all, and therefore were to provide for all they had charge of, and therefore had need to have the wisdom of the whole church, that they might distribute an equal proportion to all. But when the church was not so poor, but men might distribute to the ministers and poor, and yet not sell their whole estates, yet then also was there need of wisdom to administer the church's treasure; they must see the burdens of men, and relieve them accordingly. Nay, in this country, if the deacons have not a public providence, the poor company of the church may much want; for it is some men's sinful modesty that they will perish almost rather than ask. Therefore they being the church's stewards, must see that every one hath such a comfortable proportion of estate that he may attend to the things of God and to the edification of his own soul, and not be disquieted in his spirit. We must not serve tables, saith the apostle; but it is the deacon's office. The Holy Ghost speaketh more of the deacons than of the pastors and teachers, for they have not so much need of this kind of wisdom as the deacon hath; therefore they had need cast an eye to see what men's tables be, and so accordingly as

they may comfortably provide for them, that so they may bless God, and attend to God's ordinances (keeping the mystery of faith in a pure conscience). Must he be such now? will you say. The whole doctrine of religion is a mystery to flesh and blood. His conscience being a pure and precious vessel, the mystery of faith should be so kept that he may be as exemplary in his place for this as for wisdom. And the reason is this, because that in the persecution of the churches the deacons have been hunted after, partly to know what was the church's treasure, that they might confiscate it, and partly because they think them more excellent than other men, being called to public office; and therefore the deacons have been put to exquisite torment, as Lawrence the deacon, &c. Now, if a man be called to answer, he had need to be a man of knowledge and faith, and that in a pure conscience, for so he will dash his enemies and honour his profession. 2. He must hold the mystery of faith, that he may be able to speak a word of edification to his poor brethren, as well as minister to their bodies. Now, for his family gifts; first, he must keep his house well in order. If his children be riotous, his servants disorderly, it will weaken the deacon's fidelity; and besides, public persons must be exemplary both in public and private walking. For their wives, they must be such as may neither corrupt nor dishonour their calling, nor slanderers; grave, sober, and faithful in all things. And not *slanderers;* the word is not *devils,* not unjustly accusing any body, nor unseasonably doing of it. If one accuse another unjustly, or without due order, the deacon may grow more remiss in his office to such; and so a woman may corrupt and dishonour his calling. She must speak well of her brethren and sisters. *Grave;* they must not be light in themselves, nor in others' esteem, but reverend and grave. *Sober;* the word is the same with vigilant, 1 Tim. iii. 2. The deacon's wife therefore must be a good housewife, for else she may corrupt his calling. She must also be sober and moderate in meats and drinks, and humble and meek, not high above sobriety, above due proportion and measure. *And faithful in all things;* faithful to God, he trusts her; faithful to men, they dare trust her; faithful to her husband, faithful in speech, in carriage, not dealing unrighteously with anything committed to her hand, but helping forward her husband in the place God hath set him.

Use 1. It may serve to teach the church of God what manner of men they are to choose into this office; and,

2. It teacheth deacons how they are to behave themselves whom God calleth to this office, and what their qualifications ought to be, and what they are to grow up unto, that so they may faithfully discharge the trust that God and his church have committed unto them.

Quest. What is the office of a deacon?

Ans. To receive the offerings of the church which are brought unto them, and laid down before them, and therewith to serve tables, distributing with simplicity, not only to the ministers of the church, but to any other of the brethren, as their needs shall require, Acts vi. 3, 4. The occasion of their calling was this: the apostles being sent by Christ with fulness of power, being pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons, finding themselves burdened with the deacon's office, which was the lowest part of their spiritual work, they disburdened themselves of it, and said it was not meet they should go to serve tables; therefore to serve tables they laid down to the deacons. What the apostles did in that office they delegated to them, Acts vi. 34, 35. It seemeth they sat higher than the people, and every one brought his offering and laid it down at their feet, and they therefore received. They went not to call upon the people for such benevolence, nor seek it where it is not to be had, but the members freely offered it, and what they offered

they took. Such was the manner of the old temple: Luke xxi. 1–3, they cast money into the treasury, where it was received by the officers for that service. Neh. xiii. 12, 13, there they set down what officers they were the gifts were brought and disposed to, the treasurer, &c., and they faithfully distributed to their brethren. So David appointed men over the treasury, 1 Chron. xxvi. 20–26; and he gave Solomon the pattern of the treasury, 1 Chron. xxviii. 11. The people brought their offerings, and the Levites received and distributed them, 2 Chron. xxxi. 11–14; they were not exacted by the Levites, but brought and distributed as need required; so in the New Testament Christ first appointed his disciples the apostles for that office, who received the contributions of the church, and therewith served tables, but when necessity required, they laid down that office to others. To serve tables implies to minister to the necessity of all their brethren, for then they laid all upon the common stock, and they had nothing peculiar, because else they could not provide for the congregation, though a part had been received, as Peter told Ananias. This therefore was the care of the apostles, to see that every man's table in the congregation was spread. Now, lest it might be thought that the same course should be taken all ages in the church, therefore it fell out otherwise whilst the apostles themselves lived, that in the churches of the Gentiles which were rich, and men might keep a propriety in their estate and yet maintain the church, they were commanded to put it into a stock every Lord's day what they laid aside for the necessity of the church, 1 Cor. xvi. 2, and out of that they did prepare the Lord's table, the table of the officers and of their poor brethren of their own church and other churches, according to their necessity. Now the deacon in serving of tables must distribute in simplicity: Rom. xii. 8, 'He that distributes,' &c., which is the description of the deacon. There is this difference between distribution and contribution: he that contributes gives his private stock and offering into a common treasury, but to distribute is to turn a common stock into pieces and parcels, as every one hath need. This must be done with simplicity, which implies two things: (1.) It standeth in opposition to respect of persons; that a deacon should not respect any for country's sake, for kindred's sake, but distribute to every one as he hath need; (2.) 2 Cor. viii. 2, this word *simplicity* is there translated *liberality*, and, 2 Cor. ix. 11, the same word which is here translated *simplicity* is there translated *bountifulness*. A deacon therefore must not distribute with respect of persons, and also with a free and willing spirit, without any upbraiding of any brother or officer in the church, but freely distributing according to the will of Christ and of his church. The cheerfulness of the giver, and the readiness of his care in giving, may express much simplicity. Now the deacon is not only to distribute to the ministers, though he doth to them, 2 Cor. viii. 15; and so they did in the New Testament; for if all the church was supplied by the treasurers, then much more the apostles and officers of the church.

Object. Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth him in all good things.'

Ans. The word is not *distribute*, but *communicate*, that is, put it into a common treasury, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. There is difference between distributing and communicating: to communicate is to lay a parcel of the estate into a common stock, 'be ready to communicate;' but to distribute is another thing, which they may have occasion to do here and there as they see any have need of that which is put into the common stock; and therefore the apostle's meaning, Gal. vi. 6, is not to distribute, but to communicate according to a man's estate and the church's occasions. 1 Tim. v. 17, there

is a care to be had of the officers of the church; that which is given must be given as an honour and due, not grudgingly, but freely and readily. Those that are officers must live off their labour. Besides, the officers are to distribute to every one according to his need and use, not only necessity, but according to his expedient use, Acts iv. 35. This was never counted alms in the church or mercy, but a matter of justice and equity, whether to their own church or the members of other churches in their need, with consent of the church, Rom. xv. 26, 27. The apostle giveth this contribution a name far off from alms or charity, for he calleth it a service and grace of God to be able to communicate to the necessities of the church, 2 Cor. ix. 12 and viii. 19.

Use 1. To teach you a true discerning of the corruptions that have been brought into the office in time of popery, wherein it hath been imposed upon them to teach and baptize, some to rule, yea, overrule the officers of the church and the church itself, so that very few of them have a hand in serving of tables, a burden which the apostles perceived they were not able to bear; that is beyond the institution of Christ, and therefore an invention of man's brain, and will never do good to the church of God.

Object. Philip preached and baptized, Acts viii. 5, 12, 13, and if so, why might he not also be a ruler?

Ans. He was not only a deacon, but when the office was laid aside by reason of the persecution, then God called him forth to be an evangelist, Acts xxi. 8, and therefore he may not be a pattern for deacons in other ages. It is a like abuse that in some churches they have instead of these collections* for the poor, who receive not the contributions, but gather them and distrain for them, and that not for the ministers, but for the poor only. This never doth good in the church; but it falls out that all the collections made by the church will not maintain the poor of the church, but they are forced to beg abroad. God marvellously beareth witness to his own ordinance, that either there shall be no poor, or if there be, God so blesseth his ordinance that a little church hath well provided for all her poor, yea, sometimes to the relief of neighbour congregations.

Use 2. To teach deacons to cast about how all the tables of the congregation may be provided for, not only the Lord's table and the officer's table, but also the tables of the poor brethren, who, though they make not known their necessity, yet the deacon's care should be to see that they be provided for of things sufficient for this natural life, and therefore to provide that they may have gardens and planting grounds, &c., by which they might live.

Use 3. It behoves all the members of the body, that ought to have a care one of another, to see that there may never want provision in the deacon's hands to provide for all the tables in the churches, and to see that there never want bread in God's house; and then God hath promised, Mal. iii. 9–11, that he will open the windows of heaven and pour in a blessing. It is for brethren of higher degree to see to the treasury of the churches, Gal. vi. 10, that so no member of the church may want convenient supply; and where there is meat in God's house, there shall never want meat in any man's house. He is a faithful God, and he hath said it: 'Prove me now, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven,' &c.

Use 4. To provoke the deacons, when strangers come over from other churches, to see that none of them want convenient harbour among our congregations, especially when there is only care needful, no charges required.

Quest. But is it not the deacon's office to shew mercy with cheerfulness?

Ans. Yes, verily, to their brethren in misery; but that part of their office they chiefly perform by the hand of the widows chosen into the number, who

* Qu. 'collectors'?—Ed.

are therefore called the deacons or servants of the church. The deacon is to shew mercy with cheerfulness, Rom. xii. 8. He must not stay till his brethren be in extreme misery, but beforehand prevent them with some seasonable relief, as may save them out of the hand of such extremity. A small matter will strengthen a house when it is undershooted, but when it is down, then a great matter will not do it. So it is with a poor brother's estate; therefore, in ordinary course, distribution in time should prevent it; but the members will be sick, and sometimes sick of long diseases, and poor brethren will be sick as well as rich, and then there is room for shewing of mercy; but where there is no misery there is no need of mercy, but when danger, long sickness, danger of death, extreme wants fall upon brethren, then must the deacon shew mercy, and that with cheerfulness; that is, not grudgingly, nor of necessity. That word cheerfulness implies, that whereas the brother standeth in need of the church's love in way of mercy, this cheerfulness distributes it readily, freely, joyfully, and not rejoicing in his misery, but in that he hath to relieve him withal. This grace adorns a Christian much. Micah vii. 18, God describes himself by it, that he delights in mercy, when he hath occasion to shew mercy. That is the work he delights in. Though the sins of his people be many, and his anger is provoked against them for the same, yet he sheweth mercy, and that with delight in it. Luke xv. 20, the father was moved with compassion, and ran to meet his son, and kisses him. When the soul is very unfit to receive mercy, then he runs to his son, and kisses him; and that which God sheweth to his sons in misery, he calleth on us to shew the like, that so we may be like him; and the reason is great the church offers in shewing mercy, that they should do it with cheerfulness. 1. God's example requires it, as you see before. 2. The brotherly affection that should be between the members of the Lord Jesus requires the same. How busy is every member of the body to procure help and mercy to any member that standeth in need? Now God calleth us to be members of one body, and commendeth this work of mercy to the deacons; and they should come readily and cheerfully to this work, to shew mercy to those that are in misery. 3. From the great recompence that God poureth upon his church and the officers, when he seeth them doing of works of mercy with cheerfulness. Micah vi. 7, 8, God cared not so much for a thousand sacrifices, but that he loved that men should love mercy, and be diligent to shew it. But this part of the office, &c., 1 Tim. v. 9, and these widows are taken into the number of the deacons. The apostle speaketh not of widows to be relieved, for so a widow of thirty or forty may stand in need by sickness, or any other misery; but of such widows as are chosen into the number of those that are to shew mercy with cheerfulness, and these are the widows or servants of the church. Rom. xvi. 1, it is translated *servants*, but the word is *deacons*. There was a church at Cenchrea, an haven by Corinth, and Phebe was a deacon there; and the *servant of the church* implies the thing: for a woman may not teach nor rule in the church, and therefore she must be a deaconess; and the apostle giveth her this testimony, that she had been a succourer of him and of others also. Now this succouring is to those that are cast down by sickness or sores, to look to them, and to provide them tables; and none are so fit for this, as skilful, pitiful, and compassionate widows; they are fit to minister succour to poor brethren, to them that have none of their own kindred to provide for them and relieve them. Such are to be taken into the number of the deacons. This was the practice of the primitive church long after the apostles' times.

Quest. What manner of widows hath God allowed to be chosen into this number?

Ans. Ancient widows, of threescore years of age, well reported of for good works, for nursing of their children, for lodging of strangers, washing the saints' feet, for relieving the afflicted, for diligently following of every good work, 1 Tim. v. 9. First, they must be threescore years old, and the reason is, 1. Because they must be dedicated to the church's service; for in those hot countries many were sick of pestilential fevers; again, they were often in wars, and therefore many poor members might come maimed; as also many were called before judgment-seats, and there beaten and dismembered, and so need succour. Now, therefore, he would not have her that is chosen into the office to have an husband, for such have families of their own to look unto; and she must be one that is past marriage, for when they are called to an office, they should not easily lay it down again. And this reason the apostle giveth, for the younger women wax wanton against Christ, and will marry. They having many pagans about them, the young women taking affection to them, they would leave their faith and their office to marry them; therefore he would have them to be past marriage. 2. From the vanity that would befall younger women. If they had no employment of their own but only public, they would then be fit for the devil's work, they would go about from house to house, and be busy-bodies; but elder women would be graver than to talk of every thing they see, and therefore he would have them to be threescore years old. Now there are four things required of these widows: 1, diligence; 2, tenderness of affection; 3, lowliness in mind; 4, that she diligently follow every good work.

1. Diligence. She must be a painful woman, and take pains about a sick body, and therefore the apostle would know whether they had nursed their own children or no; for many women will not, though God gave them breasts. They will not have their sleeps broken, neither can they tarry long at home. But if a woman cannot endure to do servile offices to her own children, she will never endure to do service to elder bodies; therefore she must be one that hath nursed her own children.

2. Tenderness in affection to those that are in misery. She should be full of courtesy to all, of mercy to those that are poor and in misery; therefore the apostle would know whether she had lodged strangers or no. There is not the poorest woman but, be she loving, at one time or other she shall have strangers. And a deaconess must not be churlish nor covetous; for if so, they that are succoured by her will find but little mercy, and slender provision; she will divert the church's portion, and which the deacons commit to her, to herself; and therefore she must be one that hath entertained and lodged strangers. But the apostle would further know whether she relieved the afflicted also or no; for a man may lodge strangers for his own honour's sake, but to relieve the afflicted, argues not only courtesy but mercy also; and therefore, when such are in office, they will do it with more mercy. You will say, By this no poor woman shall be called to this office, for they can relieve but few. True, poverty is a great hindrance unto it; but the poor widow which cast more into the treasury than all the rich men did, she may have her poor mites. Suppose she hath no money, yet she can tend them, provide their diet, and do such like things for them; and is a woman ready to do this? Some may relieve with money, some with apparel, some with counsel, and that the poorest may do. Courtesy and mercy is the second property which is required in a widow, to be chosen into the number of the deacons.

3. Lowliness of mind. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'If she hath washed the saints' feet,' Gen. xix. 2, and xliii. 24, and xxiv. 32. And this Christ charges upon Simon, Luke vii. 44, that he had not done unto him. In

those countries they wore no stockings and shoes, but sandals tied about the bottom of their feet; and their first entertainment was when they came to any place, to wash their feet; therefore the widow must be such an one that hath washed the saints' feet, and must do any humble service to them. This is not useful in this country, but implies she must not skue at any poor service, or fulsome or mean office, that may concern the comfort of a weak or sick brother.

She must be diligently following every good work. This is not every good woman's care and practice. There is not any conference, but she will be one there; not any day of humiliation, but she will be one at it. This is the main thing he commendeth; she must be one of the foremost at every good work, and she follows it on till it comes to some perfection. This woman is fit for this service, this is a work of fruitfulness and godliness; nay, she must be well reported of for all these, for many an one is given to these things, but is not known so to be; therefore she must be known. That is required of all officers, of elders and deacons, and so of widows. Public officers of the church must be of good report, of a good name and fame, for that is the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ. This good report is the cognisance and badge of a godly soul; so much faith as there is in the heart, so much good report there is of a man in the mouths of men. Heb. xi. 2, faith and the fruits of faith brought the elders unto a good report; and the ground of this is, no man liveth by faith, but he liveth by Christ, and honoureth him; and the more a man honoureth Christ, the more will Christ honour him; and therefore a faithful Christian never wants a good report, but he is a crown of glory wherever he doth come. He walks in a humble frame, for that is the life of faith, and fruitful unto men, and thus he cometh to have a good report, and then will Christ have no dishonour by administrations. They that speak evil of such a man, their own consciences bear witness against them, and therefore these widows that are to be chosen to this office are to be well reported of. They that speak ill of such men as are humble and fruitful in their course, and do all for the glory of Christ, they are either brutishly ignorant, or such as sin maliciously against the Holy Ghost. Humility and love never went without a good name from the beginning of the world, nor never will to the latter end of the world.

Use 1. This doth reprove the popish manner of their kind of cloisters, for this place of the apostle was the foundation of their nunneries. When the apostle said they must be of threescore years of age, a council afterwards decreed they should be forty years old; afterwards, because the apostle saith, she must be one that hath been the wife of one man, therefore they thought virgins would be better, for that state was more honourable than marriage, and they backed it with that of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 38, 'He that giveth not his virgin in marriage doth better,' &c. But then these are not fit to tend sick persons. And then that flew in their consciences how to make that good, 'she must be threescore years old,' and therefore they ordained a prioress, an ancient woman, to be over all the rest; and because these could not tend to the sick persons, therefore they should help the church with their continual prayers. This is the order of their cloister virgins, and this is the delusion which the devil built upon this sacred ordinance. Instead of holiness, they have become sinks of all uncleanness and abominations.

Use 2. Observe what is the honour Christ reserveth for the best women. Suppose that she hath nursed her children and lodged strangers, &c., say she be well reported of for good works. This is the sum of her preferment. Christ calleth her, when she is threescore years old, to work and to minister to the church in the homeliest office, to be the right hand of the deacon in

shewing mercy with cheerfulness. Some that were high-spirited would think within themselves, that, should they that have done thus and thus now come to this, how would their spirits rise in indignation against God's ordinance; but God thinketh he doth us the greatest honour when he putteth us into any office, to be put into a spital to tend upon sick persons. Little do men think what honour God then putteth upon them. It is a great honour to be doing good. If you have been diligently following every good work, you are at the last the fitter to be put into this work, Luke xvii. 7–10. It is Christ that is to eat and drink in these poor Lazaruses; he is to be washed. She that is wearied in the field of Christianity for threescore years together, let her betake herself a little to God's work, and then she shall rest for ever in God's kingdom. And this trains up a woman to holiness of mind after many years' continuance in any employment, and God will reward it abundantly.

Use 3. To teach the church what kind of officers you yet want. You have yet none of these widows; the church hath sometimes need of such, and great need too, or else God would not have appointed the office. Many come from the ships sick, and have no servants, and we may have amongst us many of our own brethren sick to be looked unto; therefore we are to desire this of God, that he would supply us with such in due time, of such years and strength as may be fit for this employment. And also, you see whom and what manner of persons you are to choose unto this place in the church.

Use 4. To teach women what God calleth them to do. God looks whether a woman nurse her children or no: it helps you to preferment in God's eye; they must not put out their children if God give strength and ability themselves. Love hospitality, not only to poor and kindred, but to strangers also; help the afflicted, relieve them with your purses, counsel, apparel; think not scorn to do a work of love, live by faith, grow humble and diligent in good works; so you shall have a good report, and be called mothers in Israel: so was Deborah called. If the church have need of them, let them not scorn to be chosen in this office. The sister of Theodosius the emperor did not disdain it, and it was the fairest flower in her garden that in her old age she was fit to do the church service. This will add to their comfort in this world, and to their crown of glory in the world to come; and this also may teach you, that if the lowest officers of the church should be thus qualified, what should be the spirit of other officers whom God calleth to higher places in the church? And whatever their employments be, yet should their spirit be honourable. The definition of the church hath been laid open, and the distribution of it into the integral parts, which are the officers of the church and the members of it. Of the officers of the church, their qualifications and several duties hath been spoken hitherto.

Quest. What manner of men are they whom God hath appointed for to be received as brethren and members of his church?

Ans. Such as are called of God out of the world unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ, and do willingly offer and join themselves, first to the Lord and then to the church, by confession of their sins and profession of the faith, and laying hold of his covenant.

Here is a double qualification: 1. They are such as are called out of the world to the fellowship of Jesus Christ. 2. They that willingly offer and join themselves, first to the Lord, and then to his church. For the first, it appears from the ordinary notion of the word *ecclesia*, used for a church, which is a company of men called out. The church is a congregation as they are met together in a body, but *ecclesia* as they are a company called by God out of the world; so are they styled, Rom. i. 6, 7. And he tells you to

what you are called: 'to the fellowship of his Son,' 1 Cor. i 9. They are called out of the world, Acts ii. 40. When he calleth them to be members of the church, he saith, Save yourselves out of the ignorant or malignant world, for so all the world lieth either in ignorance or malignancy, 1 John v. 19; save yourselves from such; and they are called out by the ministry of the word and the Spirit of God, and they are knit into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, as he is the head of his church, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Christ, to whose fellowship we are knit, is not of one member, but of many, and they are called one Christ; they are joined to Christ, not as the hair to the head, but so as to be knit also to the rest of the members. That they are so called out before they are members, appears by this: Saul was circumcised, and an Hebrew, and was called out, though the church knew it not; and when he essayed to join himself to the church, they were afraid of him, not knowing that he was a disciple. A disciple is not one that heareth one lesson only, but a disciple is a constant hearer, and one that taketh himself bound to take out all the lessons that he heareth, and to submit to the discipline of the school. They doubted Paul was not such a disciple that was a constant hearer of God's word, or if he were, yet that he was not one that submitted himself to the discipline of the school of Christ; therefore they were afraid of him. The church may not receive any one that is circumcised, if he be ignorant, or hath not been joined in fellowship to Christ, and submitted himself unto him; he must be a disciple, a constant hearer, an obedient learner, and one that submits to the discipline of the school of Christ; such an one should be received. But it may fall out men may in hypocrisy hear constantly, and practise what they hear, and profess subjection to the discipline of the church; therefore, though this be enough for the church to receive, yet it is not enough for him to offer himself, unless he can say that Christ is his portion, or that he truly waits upon Christ for the revelation of his grace unto his soul. Such a soul is invested with Christ, and such should they be that offer themselves, Mat. xxii. 11, 12. If a man be not found clothed with the wedding-garment of Christ's righteousness, of justification, of sanctification, then saith Christ, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having thy wedding-garment?' Though he fall not out with his servants for bringing him in, yet he saith to him, 'Friend, how camest thou in?' 2dly, They willingly join and offer themselves, first to the Lord, and then to the church. First to the Lord: Isa. lvi. 6, they must join to the Lord before he brings them to his holy mountain, and this they do willingly. Ps. cx. 2, 3, God's people are a willing people. Acts ii. 41, 'They that gladly received the word were baptized' unto Christ, and so received into the church. Barnabas tells the church how Paul had seen the Lord by the way, and then he is received, after he is joined to the Lord, and then to the church. Acts ii. 41, 47, though they were before of the church of Israel, yet they were not received into the Christian church before they repented and made a covenant with God, and received the seal of the covenant, and then they were added to it; Acts ix. 26, 27, though his sins were pardoned in his baptism, yet when he cometh to Jerusalem he essayed to join it, it was his own voluntary act; though you read, Mat. xxii. 9, that Christ said, 'Compel them to come in, that my house may be full,' Luke xiv. 23. Though there be a compulsion to be used for the filling of Christ's church, yet this is not the compulsion of the civil sword, for it is the compulsion of the servants that are sent to call, and they are the ministers of Christ. And how must they compel? By convincing them of their natural state, by driving them out of themselves, and driving them unto Christ, partly by the law, partly by the gospel. It is a compulsive persuasion, by terrors, by

threatenings, and by promises, &c. The magistrate may compel men to hear, but to compel them to come into the church is not compatible to the name of the church ; for they must be such as are called out of the world, and when they are called, they will readily desire it; and it is a sign that they are not called, if, when they have opportunity, they do not desire it, Rom. i. 15. God commandeth, and requires it of them, and will charge it upon them for sin if they do it not; but neither the church nor the civil magistrates may compel them ; for God's people are 'a willing people,' and it is no more but reason that no man should be compelled to subject himself to any government that he is not willing to submit unto.

Now to the manner how they must join. Three things they used in the primitive church, and long after. 1. Confession of their sins, Mat. iii. 6. They were members of the church of Israel before that, yet they were not admitted to baptism, and to be his disciples, unless they confessed their sins, and their subjection to take out such lessons as he should teach them ; therefore they said unto him, Luke iii. 10–12, 'What shall we do ?' Acts xix. 18, they that believed, confessed their witchcraft and whoredoms before they were received into the fellowship of the church. 2. Profession of their faith. The eunuch was a proselyte and member of the Jewish church, yet he must profess his faith before he is baptized ; Acts viii. 37, 38, and thus he was made fit for church-fellowship. 3. By taking hold of the covenant. What covenant ? Read Isa. lvi. 6, 7 ; he requires that they be joined to the Lord, and love the Lord, and keep his Sabbaths, and then take hold of his covenant. And what is the covenant which God made with the house of Israel ? Deut. xxix. 10–13, you there see what it is ; they come to be established his people by entering into covenant with him. Ps. l. 5, they are not his people till they enter into covenant with him. It is God's covenant, because, as in marriage God is the third party in the covenant between man and woman, so in the church covenant it is tripartite, between God, and the church, and the member received. They may not receive into the church but those whom God receiveth in, nor dismiss those but whom God dismisseth ; therefore a man must take hold of the covenant, and then God bringeth him to be joyful in the house of his ordinances ; they shall then receive more joy and comfort than ever. God hath not promised any constant supply of comfort and blessing from his ordinances, but to those that not only join to the Lord, but also lay hold of his covenant, that is, the covenant he hath made with his church. And thus you see the meaning of the phrases in the New Testament, they did join, and they were added to the church ; that is, the Gentiles, who were before joined to the church of Israel, were joined to the Christian church by laying hold of this covenant.

Use 1. This serveth to confirm and justify the lawfulness, and in truth the necessity, of this course that is taken in admitting your church members. Look not at it as a work of supererogation, as a thing uncomely to be done, or as devised by men, but as an ordinance of God for preparation of men for the church, and admission of them into the church, that hath its institution from the Holy Ghost. What need we be admitted, will you say, when we are members of a church before ? Therefore consider, Paul was a member of a church of Christ, yet they were afraid of him. A man may not thrust himself upon a church whether they will or no, and they may also not receive him, unless they persuade themselves that he is a disciple, a learner, a constant hearer, and a submitter to the discipline of the church. Barnabas must make that plain to the church that he is a disciple, and then they receive him into the church. Those that are received, must either be such as approve themselves by their conversation, or by the testimony of some

whom the church dare trust; you also compel none to be members of the church. Compel them by conviction, by strength of argument, and bonds of conscience; but they must freely offer and join themselves when they have been called, and have obeyed the call. The Lord is the head of the church; and to be joined to the head, or joined to the members, and not to the head, will not make a man a living member, but he will be a dead member, that will rather be a burden than any help to the church. You see also evident practices of confession and profession. Where there is little notice of any man's sins, there is not that need of large confession; but notwithstanding, they must make profession of their faith in Christ.

Use 2. To direct such as desire church fellowship, to teach you what persons you must grow up to be, such as are called out of the world. You must confess your sins as you have been known to live in, and profess your faith, lay hold of the covenant, come not in till you be clothed with the garment of Christ's righteousness, to wait and trust upon him for his grace, or else God will ransack you, and say, 'How came you in hither?' All profaneness, all malignancy, all ignorance must be laid aside; give up yourselves to God, and then to the church.

Use 3. To comfort the people of God that do thus come into the church. God saith that he will make their souls 'joyful in the house of prayer,' and that he will accept their offerings, Isa. lvi. 6, 7. If we find our hearts uncomfortable, consider, have we not sat loose from God, or have we not sat loose from his covenant since we last received comfort from it? Our joying was but for a fit, and we sat loose from God, from his ordinances, from his Sabbaths, and from our brethren; then no wonder that we are uncomfortable. But come thus, as you have heard, into God's presence, and then we may comfortably expect that he will make us joyful in the house of prayer.

Quest. What is the office or duty which God calleth the brethren unto, the members of the church?

Ans. To brotherly love, and to the fruits thereof, brotherly unity, brotherly equality, and brotherly communion. First, brotherly love. This the Holy Ghost presseth upon the brethren of the church in divers places: 1 Peter iii. 8, 'Love as brethren,' if you be brethren. 1 Peter ii. 17, 'Love the brotherhood;' in that whole society in which God hath joined you, love them. 1 Thes. iv. 9, 'Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.' Heb. xiii. 1, love is such an affection of the soul, whereby we offer communion one with another, and communication of good one to another. On the other side, hatred is that whereby one cannot endure to have fellowship with another, nor communicate any good to him; but when we love the brethren, then are we in heart with them, and desire to do good unto them, and to receive good from them. Add to the fruits thereof brotherly unity: Eph. iv. 3, 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;' Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 'Behold how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;' Col. iii. 15, 'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which you are called in one body;' Acts vii. 26, 'Sirs, you are brethren, why do you wrong one another?' It is against the nature of brethren for to harm one another; and this Christ beggeth of his Father for those that should believe on his name, John xvii. 20, 21, that they may be one with the Father, and one with the Son, and one another. This is the main petition in which he desires the fruit of his suffering might break forth. There is no greater testimony of Christ's coming to save his people than this, that all the churches of God, and all brethren, are all of one mind, of one heart, and of one judgment. This is that convinces the world that Christ

came in the name of the Father, when brethren dwell together in unity. The second fruit of brotherly love is brotherly equality; and this God hath respect unto in all the members of the church. Though there be a difference in outward respects, yet in the church privileges, as they are all brethren, they are all equal. Deut. xvii. 19, 20, the king, the chief governor, must read in the book of the law all his days, 'that so his heart may not be lifted up above his brother.' And for the ministers of the word, Christ says unto them, 'Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, as ye are all brethren;' and therefore, being all brethren, they must not take up masterly authority one over another. And the apostle hath great regard to this, that there might be an equality, so that the whole burden might not lie upon some, while other go eased. And this is the equality that God requires of the members of the church. The third fruit of brotherly love is brotherly communion or fellowship, which is also the fruit of both the other fruits of brotherly unity, and brotherly equality: Acts ii. 42, 'They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in prayers; and, ver. 46, 'They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,' and they had constantly fellowship together; and this also God requireth of brethren that are knit in covenant together in church fellowship

Quest. Wherein standeth that brotherly unity which members are to hold one with another?

Ans. To be perfectly joined together in one mind, and one judgment, and one speech, in one truth; and where we cannot be of one judgment, still to be of one heart; not provoking or envying one another, but forgiving and forbearing one another; not judging or despising one another in difference of weakness, but so far as we are come to walk by the same rule, and teach and learn one of another the way of God more perfectly, 'till we are grown up in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man in Christ Jesus.' First, they must be perfectly joined together in one mind, one judgment, one speech, in one truth, 1 Cor. i. 10. He would have them to be of the same mind, and same judgment, and that not in a common error, but in one truth. You may see what is the difference betwixt mind and judgment, therefore the apostle doth exhort them to be of one mind, to be of the same judgment, for sometimes men are not of a contrary judgment because things are clear, yet they have a mind to conceive and judge otherwise, and so to express themselves; but he would have them have a mind to be all of one judgment. So should also their speech be the same, for he knew that difference of expression might breed diversity of mind. He would not have men express them otherwise than as things commonly received. He would have them avoid Babylonish confusion, and to be all of one speech. This also he earnestly desires of the Philippians, that they would mind, think, and speak one thing, Philip. i. 1, 2. He would have them willingly frame their hearts, and judgments, and speech like one to another; and see what weight he lays upon it, 'If there be any consolation in Christ,' &c. There is no consolation of Christ in their hearts, where there is a willingness to be of a contrary mind; there may be truth, but no consolation; this will darken their consolations, where there is not a mutual consolation in their words, speeches, and thoughts. He adds further, 'If any comfort of love,' &c. Hath not this comforted your hearts, the love of God, and the love of your brethren? If you ever had comfort from these, then be of one accord. *If any fellowship of the Spirit.* If you be all of one spirit, then let the spirit in all your words, minds, judgments, and speeches be all one. *If any bowels of mercy.* If you have any bowels to me, or yourselves, to your brethren, be of one

mind.] And this it was that fulfilled apostolical joy, to see them all of one mind. Eph. iv. 23, 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind;' that is, the inclination and bent of their minds, that they may be willing to see the truth, and yield to the truth, and to be of one judgment. James iv. 5, there is a spirit in man that lusteth after error, there is a spirit that lusteth to be of a contrary mind to another man's mind; therefore, saith the apostle, 'Be ye renewed in the spirit of your minds;' this is a ground of much affliction to any humble soul, when he is forced to be of a contrary mind or judgment. It calls to mind the corruption of nature; if it be truth in me, then why should not he see it as well as I? And it is a great temptation, for it makes a man to call into question his own judgment, and the truth. But suppose we cannot be of one judgment, nor of one speech (for a man must speak as he judgeth; if he must judge, he must not prevaricate), yet still we must be of one heart, we must be of a bent to draw as close one to another as may be, and to drive it as far as truth will bear. Philip. iv. 1, he desires they may be of one mind, though they judge differently, and speak differently, yet that they be willing to close one with another; they did not affect to be of one mind and heart, and therefore he beseecheth the pastor to help them an-end, that they might mind one thing in the Lord; mind unity when it may be attained. But to help forward this brotherly love, the apostle exhorts them not to provoke one another, not to envy one another, Gal. v. 26. Let there be no wrath to provoke, no pride to envy, and this will maintain brotherly love; but because provocation will arise from those that have attained least degrees of grace, therefore we should forbear and forgive one another, Eph. iv. 2. If a man seeth that if he should speak any further, it would break love, then he forbeareth to speak his judgment in a thing. Men should take their times to speak, and not to exasperate the spirit of one another; so also must we forgive one another, Eph. iv. 32. When any one hath provoked another, let him forgive him, although he is not bound to express his forgiveness till the other desires it. Again, there is another rule, not to judge nor despise one another in differences of weakness, Rom. xiv. 3. He doth not require that they should be of one judgment; but they should not express their judgment if they see it will hinder edification, Rom. xiv. 22. But the rule is, let him not judge if the differences be not fundamental: 'Let not him that eateth,' &c. So great is the moderation of the apostle, he doth not bind them to be of one judgment and speech in such things; and therefore to bind all men to be of their own judgment and practice, be the things never so circumstantial, is against the nature of brotherly love, and not to be of an apostolical spirit. So far as we are come to 'walk by the same rule,' Philip. iii. 15, 16, he would have their mind one, and their rule one, and that will much help to unity. And what is that rule? Gal. vi. 16, it is in both places the rule of a new creature that saith, 'Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which works by love;' and the meaning is, he looks at all things as empty of true spiritual comfort, but faith in Christ, and then all rents about circumcision and uncircumcision will in due time fall to nothing. Stick to this rule, count Christ all in all, that his name might be magnified, his grace sanctified, and then they that plead for ceremonies will quickly come to be of one heart, although not of one judgment. What maketh a man to have a mind to differ? Is it to magnify the name of Christ? No; but to walk by that rule, ever preserveth unity of mind (to teach and learn one another the way of God more perfectly), this is another means to maintain unity of mind. Acts xviii. 26, Apollos and Aquila they both minded Christ, and that maketh him willing to learn, and them willing to teach him. Though he was a learned man in the

Scriptures, they took him unto them, and would not suffer him to be of another mind, but they expounded the way of God more fully unto him; they were not afraid of suspicion of arrogancy, that they should teach a learned man, but knew that he being a good man would be willing to learn of them, though they were but tent-makers. This that hath been spoken will not reach only to difference of mind, but to different practice also. If I know anything will grieve and offend my brother, and will be a stumbling-block unto him, it is good not to do it, Rom. xiv. 21. Whatsoever is offensive in judgment or practice should be removed; and therefore we should covet to be of one judgment. If we cannot, we may forbear the practice of many things that may be offensive; if there must needs be a difference, yet let there be one heart, endeavouring to be of one mind, not provoking, envying, or despising one another, but to grow up to the state of perfection that God calleth us unto: Eph. iv. 13, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' This is the end that ministers look at, that Christians in their edifying should look at. Until we come to that unity, we are not perfect; but when we are, then we are come to the 'full measure of the stature of Christ.' Do but follow faith and love, and then when we come to believe, mind, and practise one thing, then are we perfect. It argues, that brethren should have a care one of another's faith, love, knowledge, that we may be all fit to be presented unto Christ. Num. xii. 29, I would that all God's people could prophesy. If we desire to help one another in the ways of grace, it is an evident sign of the work of grace in our own hearts; and till a man come to this, his work is not done.

Quest. Wherein standeth the brotherly equality which we are to hold one with another?

Ans. In submitting ourselves alike to all God's ordinances, in enjoying alike all Christian liberties, in preferring others before ourselves, in seeking one another's welfare, and feeling their estates as our own, in bearing the burdens one of another's estates, and imposing no burdens but in equal proportion. The sum is, that brotherly equality standeth in equal submission to all God's ordinances, in equal fruition of all Christian liberties, in giving equal honour to all alike, to feel one another's estates as our own, and to bear an equal proportion of burdens. First, for equality, in equal submission to all God's ordinances, and equal fruition of all Christian liberty. Gal. iii. 28, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for they are all one in Christ Jesus.' There is no difference between nations, nor between masters nor servants, nor between male or female in Christian liberties; one hath as much right to Christ, and the means of enjoying Christ, as the other; to the same covenant, to the same seals of the covenant, to the same admonitions and exhortations. What is administered to one is free to another, without respect of persons. These words the apostle useth also in another place, to shew equality of duty in submission to God's ordinances. Col. iii. 10–12, he exhorteth them all to put on the new man, and to put off 'anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,' &c., and to put on 'bowels of mercies, and kindness, and humbleness of mind,' &c.; he calleth upon them all as one, all the faithful alike, every one to be clothed with these duties, and to put off these sins: for 'in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision,' &c. What duty one Christian owes, that another owes; what grace one should put on, that should another put on; and this equality is a spiritual equality. Deut. xvii. 19, 20, there it is said that the king should read the book of the

law all the days of his life, 'that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren,' though he be king. Solomon in all his royalty must not be exalted above his brethren; every commandment of God is alike given to the king as to the meanest man. It is said of kings, that they 'did evil in the sight of the Lord.' Threatenings and commandments belong alike to them; and the consideration that God putteth no difference between kings and peasants, will make him not to count his subjects like dogs. But the same inheritance is for them, the same church privileges; they are all one in privilege, all one in duty; and this they are and should be. Ezek. xlvi. 10, 'And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth;' they must not stay for him, neither must he be gone before them, but upon necessary occasions, as any other member of the church may. This is the rule, God by this means accommodating the spirit of great kings to frame themselves to brotherly equality in the house of God, with alike reverence and subjection, and alike to claim all the privileges of God's house. This is true spiritual equality. Not but that they may sit in a more eminent place in the house of God, that are of greater authority in the commonwealth. Joash, by the pillar, 2 Chron. xxiii. 13, which was the place for the king to sit in. It may be lawful in difference in that kind; not that men should be ambitious of the highest places; for it is spoken of the pharisees, Mat. xxiii. 6, and that with dislike, that they affected the chiefest seats in the synagogues; yet a confusion of civil difference is not comely. There are no other meetings, but in spiritual duties and privileges they are all alike, there is equality; they may not stay for him, nor he go out before them, but they should come in and depart together.

TWO LETTERS

WHICH PASSED BETWEEN THE REVEREND MR JOHN GOODWIN AND THE AUTHOR, CONCERNING

A CHURCH COVENANT.

To the Reverend Mr Thomas Goodwin.

My dear friend, whom I love and honour, if not enough, yet (certain I am) exceeding much in the Lord. I am sorry, there being differences between us otherwise, that in this we should so long agree neither to send so much as the smallest piece of his mind to other in writing for a token. Upon which of us the law of love and Christian acquaintance rather imposed it to have first appeared in breaking this agreement, the same law prohibits to dispute. Whether it will ease the burden on my part or no, I leave to your ingenuity to consider and determine; but this I may truly say unto you, that I have had many thoughts from time to time since your departure from us that have dearly longed after your bosom, and would hardly have been kept from their longing till now, but by a strong hand of indispensable occasions and employments otherwise. And if my respects to you did not command me to entreat you the more gently in this behalf, I might truly charge upon yourself (in part) the occasion of my silence hitherto. Your authority, grace, learning, parts, judgment, and example have holpen to make the stone of separation so massy and heavy, that we are constrained to be at double pains and labour in removing and rolling it from off the consciences of our people. A great part of our employment is to stanch the issue of that fountain of blood, which you and some others of your conformity have opened in the womb of our churches here. We, hoping again your re-union with us and return unto us, through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to give you light to comprehend your darkness in those things which yet lie under dispute between us, are willing to save you what sorrow we can against your return, and for this purpose endeavonr ourselves to make your mistakes as innocent as may be (in respect of execution), by keeping as many as we can from stumbling or falling thereby. Dear brother, that there were a heart in us to lay our heads together for the finding out of some course (if possible) that the sword may not always thus devour! Doubtless there are waters to be digged that would much assuage the heat, if not wholly quench the flames of these contentions and divisions. How deeply is it to be lamented, that he by whom God hath reconciled the world to himself should be made a means of dividing this reconciled world in itself! The heavens (I doubt not) will

accord us; yet were it our greater comfort and glory if the earth herein might prevent the heavens. I verily believe it would go far, and strike a great stroke in compromising between the parties at variance, if the great men and chief leaders on both sides could be persuaded but to take fast hold upon this ingenious, free, and noble resolution (which yet I suppose we all pretend to do), τῇ ἀληθείᾳ θύειν μᾶλλον, ἢ δουλεύειν ὑποθέσει, rather to do sacrifice to the truth than to be servile to suppositions. I know not how to open my mouth wide enough to shew you the whole enlargement of my heart unto you. If we saw the truth clearly with you, you should not reign alone; we would doubtless (at once) divide such a kingdom with you and reign too. Many indeed of your party are ready to say (in effect), that as it is heaven that separated you from us, so it is the world that separates us from you; but if you have the truth with you (which indeed if you have, at least in many of your best-beloved maxims, woe be to my wits, reason, and understanding; never poor man so strangely misused by such friends in this world), it will never be a debtor to such interpreters or agents for it. As for the world, if it be as little on that side of the sea as it is on this, it will never be so much as a mote in your eye to hinder you from seeing any truth of God clearly. But as little as it is with us, we think it too great and too good to be sacrificed upon the service of an error at any time (if yet those that forsake us do it not rather out of a desire and intent to spare the world than to sacrifice it), otherwise I doubt not but the servants of God in England tread as light upon the earth as you do in Holland, and are as ready to buy the truth and give as good rates for it as the best merchants amongst you. But however, I know that this left-handed spirit rules much in men of your party, who, not content to make our standing nought, labour much to make us worse than our standing; yet I make no question but your anointing teacheth you more Christian thoughts concerning us; and if we judged it any advantage to the truth or cause we maintain against you, we durst vie moral imputations with you, and are confident that we could assign and suggest against you both as many and as likely indirect and fleshly grounds for your departure from us, as you can against us for keeping our first standing and profession. But the truth will never be made great by such demonstrations as these on either side. Sometimes the truth is there where a man for many reasons would think there were least hope to find it; and again many times the fairest overtures and pleasingest inducements will but deceive and disappoint in this kind. And as for that kind of truth which we inquire after and toil in the fire of contention to find out, viz. spiritual and divine, there is no substantial or satisfying means for the discovery of it but by a holy, humble, and impartial consultation with the oracles of God about it; yea, if it be of that species or special kind of divine truth which is not spread (as manna was) upon the face of the Scriptures, but lieth low amongst the deep things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10 (as it seems the truth in those questions depending between us doth), now it is not sufficient simply to consult or ask the Scriptures concerning them; but they must be examined and re-examined again and again, both solitary and in concert; they must be put home to it, and urged and pressed close together before they will speak their mind plainly in this case, or deliver out any of this treasure; yea, in many cases a man must be content to go to the one end of them to know what they mean in the other; yea (that which is much considerable, and I fear much wants that which belongs to it), they may seem to deliver many pleasing and plausible answers, under the shadow whereof the judgment and conscience of a man may be much refreshed for a season, so that they may be ready to shout for joy, and congratulate themselves with

his acclamation, that cried 'εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα,' he had found, he had found; and yet none of these answers be the τὸ ζητούμενον, true, direct, and bottom meaning of them. As Samson gave Delilah answer upon answer to her question or demand, which pleased her for a time, carrying a plausible semblance and reality of truth in them, but still her experience discovered the insufficiency of them, and then she rejected them, and would not give over till she had the true answer indeed, Judges xvi. 7, 8, &c.; so (doubtless) the Scriptures may in many places to our apprehensions affirm many things, and deliver out many notions of choice approbation to us for a time, the weakness and defects whereof notwithstanding further time and experience and a clearer light may discover; yea, there may from the very same Scriptures rise up many meanings and interpretations before us one after another that may be in our eye as Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, was in Samuel's (when he was sent to anoint one of his sons for king), 'Surely' (saith he, looking on Eliab) 'the Lord's anointed was before him;' but he was yet a great way off from the Lord's anointed. There was Eliab, and Abinadab, and Shammah, and more than as many more presented before him before David came in sight (who was the Lord's anointed indeed); he was behind, and a great way off in the field, and must be sent for before he comes; so the anointed sense and meaning of the Scriptures may be yet far off when we persuade ourselves with the greatest confidence that it is before us. And as he said of benefits, *multa perdenda sunt, ut semel ponas benè*, a man must bestow many amiss, that he may bestow one well; so many times a man must be content first to take up and then to cast away many interpretations of Scripture (and those sometimes such which otherwise he would not willingly part with), that he may interpret at last as he ought to do. I make no question but you have had experience of these things in yourself more than once. For my part, I confess it hath been a frequent thing with me, in the course of my studies and meditations, to meet with, both from the pens or mouths of others, and from mine own conceptions also, several interpretations which have much affected me upon the first greeting, yea, which for a time I have nourished in my bosom and made treasure of, and yet afterwards have apparently seen that ὁ θησαυρος, ἄνθρακες ἦσαν, my rejoicing was not good, and by a strong hand of superior conviction have been compelled to call that darkness, and to cast it from me, which sometimes I called light, and kept close unto. Wherefore I beseech you, by the tender mercies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and (if it be fitting so to engage you) by the glory of those many talents given unto you, the strength whereof (methinks) should work through a napkin, and disdain so weak and contemptible an enclosure, once more to survey with a single, impartial, deliberate, and disengaged eye (if you can get out whether it be mote or beam that is gotten into it), your present thoughts and apprehensions concerning those things that have removed you from off an English table, and put you under a Holland bushel. Confident I am that there is a light beyond your light in these matters, if your eyes by long slumber be not over heavy to open, and that your rods will make but the enchanter's serpents, which Aaron's serpent will devour. I profess in the sight of God, and in as great singleness and simplicity of heart as ever man in this world spake word unto you, that I do as clearly apprehend error and mistake throughout the greatest part of your way as I do truth in this conclusion, that twice two makes four. The necessity of your covenant, prolix Confession of Faith, putting men to deliver their judgments in points of doubtful disputation upon and before their admission into your churches; the power of the keys and of ordination of ministers to be the right and inheritance of the whole body of the congre-

gation, and of every member promiscuously and indifferently; the divine institution or peremptory necessity of your ruling elders, the necessity of widows as of officers in the church; the absolute necessity of one and the same government or discipline in all particulars whatsoever, in all churches, in all times and places; a full and peremptory determination of all things whatsoever appertaining to the worship of God, with divers like positions (which are the very life, soul, and substance of your way); I am at perfect peace in my thoughts that you will never be able to demonstrate or prove from the Scriptures to any sober-minded and considering man. I am loath to overcharge you with words and writings. To desire you to return and to repair the breach you have made upon us, I confess were a hard motion, and of slender hope to be obtained, were it not made to a truly great and noble spirit; and, *cæteris paribus*, the request from you to me, and others with me, to come over unto you, were more reasonable than that they should desire you to return back again unto us, because you have suffered already (at least in the thoughts of many) under the disparagement of some unconstancy; and equal it is, where there is not some over-ruling reason to the contrary, that burdens should not be doubled, but rather divided. But herein I beseech you consider, your advantage is the greater, that you have by this means πλείονα θυσίαν, the greater and better sacrifice to offer upon the service of the truth than we, if you can apprehend the truth with us, and deny yourself the second time in turning back again unto us. And yet give me leave to say this unto you, though your restitution to us be one of the first-born of my this-world's wishes, and the day thereof would be above the rest of the days of the year, yet had I rather mourn over your absence still, than bring you back again any otherwise than by the hand of an angel of light. I relish no satisfaction from any man to any request, but what I purchase more by reasoning than requesting. And for your part I know that, in the motions of this nature, a friend and a feather are both alike, except reason makes the difference. I have made bold upon some words of encouragement from your mouth, related to me by Dr P., to propound a query unto you concerning the head of your way, your church covenant, with some reasons of my scrupling, partly the lawfulness, but especially the necessity, of your indispensable exaction thereof. If you be willing to treat with your old friend in a way of this commerce, I shall hereafter (God willing), as health and liberty will agree, desire like satisfaction from you in some other particulars of your way; but if the motion dislikes you, neither have I any further pleasure in it. If you shall suspend your answer, give me leave so far to please myself as to interpret your silence a ground of hope that your own coming is not far off; or otherwise, if your answers be too strong for me, and able to remove my mountains out of my way, they are not the seas that shall keep friends asunder any longer. I am yours (if you care to own me). Send me over the silver and bright shining wings of truth, and upon these I come flying over to you out of hand. I would be as glad of a bargain of truth at any rate as another, God having taught me how to drown the world in the least drop of the water of life. Only this I desire may be the law of this dissertation between us, that since the strength of your confidence in your way is such as to break out into a departure from us (and I conceive double light to be requisite for a separation in any kind, whereas single light sufficeth for any man's continuance in his standing), you will go to work as a prince and not as a beggar, and commend the truth of what you hold and practise in opposition to us by a high hand of pregnant and express Scriptures, and not beg anything by any loose or faint interpretation

or supposition. We look for from you letter for letter, word for word, tittle for tittle, for the proof of all you maintain against us, and otherwise cannot but judge it somewhat hard to be so forsaken, only because our logic is more dull and less piercing than yours. I have used the more liberty of speech unto you, because I know you are well able to bear it. The queries and objections which I offer against your church covenant are these.

We doubt by what warrant of Scripture, or otherwise, any church of Christ can impose any such express and formal covenant upon all those that desire membership with them, as a peremptory condition of their admittance, as is now generally practised in all your churches. We conceive the Scripture will nowhere justify these proceedings, but rather judge there is much evil, and a manifold inconvenience, in the urging and exacting such a covenant.

1. Confident we are (as confidence itself can make us) that there is no command given to the churches for exacting any such covenant of those that are to be admitted into church fellowship with them. So that we conceive any such exaction to be a mere human invention, and a strain of that wisdom that desires to exalt itself not only above all that is practised by men, but above that which is written by God himself; yea, though instances and examples could be produced of such covenant, both demanded and given, yet this may stand without any warrant of lawfulness, much more without the imposition of any necessity upon churches at this day, to make the like demand of their intended members; and most of all it may stand, without any necessity upon churches to make the demand as of a duty of absolute necessity, or as a part of the worship and service of God. Because (1.) no example bindeth but by virtue and in the strength of some commandment. And if there were any thing necessary to be done which is not commanded by God, then must there be found weakness and imperfection in his law. Therefore, to make any thing necessary which the law of God maketh not necessary, is not to keep the law, but (as James saith) to judge it. (2.) There may be examples found of many things done by Christians (yea, by whole churches) in the primitive times, not only lawfully, but with high and special approbation; the doing whereof in these times is not only no ways necessary, but liable to much question, whether lawful or convenient. The selling of lands and houses by those that were the possessors of them, and bringing and laying money at the apostles' feet, was practised (we know) in the apostles' times, Acts iv. 34, 35; and, as Tertullian witnesseth, continued two hundred years together in the church. But I know no man now pleads for the necessity of any such practice; yea, whether it would not be much more inexpedient for the gospel (and consequently in some degree unlawful) if now put in practice, a few thoughts would sufficiently discover. (3.) And, lastly, there is no question to be made but that many times the diversification of circumstances and aspects of things in the world, and course of God's providence, have not only a lawful power of dissolving the binding force and authority of many examples, but of suspending our obedience to many rules, and precepts, and exhortations. As, for example, that kind of salutation between men, mentioned Gen. xxvii. 26, 1 Sam. xx. 41, and oft elsewhere, being generally left and out of use. Those injunctions of Paul, Rom. xvi. 16, 1 Cor. xvi. 20, and elsewhere, 'Greet ye one another with an holy kiss,' impose no such literal tie upon the saints in these days, as when they were written; neither do I conceive (nor, I suppose, you) that the elders of the church are now bound to anoint the sick with oil, because this is commanded, James v. 14. Neither do I conceive that the French churches lie under any guilt of sin, for suffering their teachers to have their heads covered

in their public ministry, notwithstanding the rule or direction of Paul: 1 Cor. xi. 4, 'Every man praying or prophesying, having any thing on his head, dishonoureth his head;' because that topical custom among the Grecians, upon which Paul built this rule or assertion, is wholly disused by their nation, and the contrary generally practised among them. Though I do not think this scripture is to be restrained to the teachers only, but to concern as well the whole assembly of men present, who are all here said to pray or prophesy in a passive sense (as women also are, ver. 5), that is, to partake of these ordinances with the teachers. Other like instances might be given. And doubtless the rule that Cameron gives (who was a man of as much learning, sharpness of wit, and happiness in opening the Scripture, as any of the reformed churches in France, yea, I may say, in any part of the world, have enjoyed of latter times) is most true.* There are many things commanded in Paul's epistles whereof there is no use at this day (viz., as touching the literal and precise observation), as is that of prophesying, 1 Cor. xiv., and concerning the habit of women prophesying, which belong not to our times; but concerning prophesying, we shall (God willing) move some special queries afterwards. And I verily believe, that one main reason and grand occasion of all separation from us (on that hand you are gone) is, because the words of the sacred text fitted to particular occasions, and to the condition of the times wherein they were written, are taken and applied by such men to themselves and others as they find them, without due respect had to those weighty and material differences that are between the one and the other (as might be demonstrated at large if it were any part of our present purpose). In the mean season, it is evident by what has been said, that though particular instances could be produced, that the covenant so much magnified, so indispensably urged by your churches (generally) upon their members before their admission, yea, by some great masters of your way, defended in writing as the very form and essence of a true church (the writing whereof hath gone a long time under your own name, but of late I hear you have disclaimed it), hath been practised by former churches, and put upon those that desired membership with them, yet this is no sufficient ground to conclude a necessity now lying upon all churches to do the like, except there be a precept or command found for the doing it; no, nor yet to prove a lawfulness of doing it, except all circumstances be clear and fair for the doing it; nay, a precept or command itself will not evince a necessity hereof, if any master or grand circumstance be now changed or altered, upon which the precept was first given.

2. But yet, notwithstanding, I add in the second place, neither do the Scriptures afford any instance or example wherein any such covenant hath ever been demanded or exacted by any particular church, of those who desired fellowship with it. But many instances there are, wherein only upon a sober profession of their faith in Christ, and entertainment of the gospel, men have been received into churches, without the least noise or mention of any such covenant: Acts ii. 41, 'They that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added (viz., to the church) about three thousand souls.' Some of your judgment strongly conceit that they espy their covenant in these words, *were added;* but surely if they were assisted by the same imagination, they might as soon discover it in those words, Gen. i. 1, 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth;' for to any reasonable and disengaged apprehension, that word προσετίθεντο, with the number of Christians joined with it, only expresses the exceeding great work of God in making so great an enlargement or addition to his church in so short

* Myrothec. in cap. v. Jacobi.

a time; and doubtless a man must get a dispensation for his understanding, to enable him to think or believe, that within the compass of half a day, or a little more at the most (perhaps somewhat less, for the former part of the day was well spent before Peter began his sermon, and how long he continued preaching is uncertain; it seems he was not very brief, ver. 40), three thousand persons should particularly and distinctly, one after another, in the same place, and before the same persons, be examined and tried, take a solemn covenant, repeating your contents and words thereof. Doubtless the art and method of such dispatch is utterly lost and perished from the world at this day. Either the covenant they made was very brief, and but an ace to yours, or else the motion of their tongues, in speaking, much swifter than our thoughts. You must favour yourself beyond all reason, in both these suppositions, or else suppose your covenant no longer here. Besides, evident it is, that those that were added to the church were baptized, before this is affirmed of them. Now, being baptized, and that in an orderly and right way (as you will not deny), this did immediately qualify them for church fellowship according to your own grounds, and the truth itself; therefore they needed not the mediation of a covenant to make them capable hereof, so that you see an impossibility of any covenant to be implied here. And if you be not relieved at this door, there is little hope to find more charity in this kind at others. Philip required no other covenant or condition of the eunuch to qualify him for baptism, and thereby to give him entrance into the church, but only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart, and to profess it to him, Acts viii. 37. When Paul essayed to join himself with the disciples at Jerusalem, Acts ix. 26, the reason why they declined him for a time, was not because they tendered a covenant to him, and he refused it, but because they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple, implying, that had they believed this concerning him, that he had been a disciple, *i. e.* a believer, they would have received him without more ado; yea, upon Barnabas his mere testimony of him, without any covenant subscribed, confession made, or word spoken by himself, he was received, ver. 27, 28. So again, Acts xi. 24, there is mention made of many that were joined to the Lord, *i. e.* were immembered into the church; but no more words of any such covenant as you urge than a deaf man may hear. If you propose the passages of the New Testament further, you will descry many more stars of this constellation. Neither here can you have recourse to those covenants mentioned in Old Testament, Ezra x. 3, Neh. ix. 38, &c., to pattern yours withal; for then you fly to a sanctuary which yourselves have polluted, by destroying all sympathy and agreement between a national church, and that which you have instituted in particular. And besides, to forsake the guidance of the Spirit of God under the New Testament, to seek to make out our thoughts by the Old, is to ask the twilight in the evening, whether it were light at noon-day. Moreover (if desire of brevity for the present did not bind my hands), it were easy to demonstrate unto you, what a solemn disagreement there is many ways between these covenants and yours, and particularly in that precise circumstance which must have relieved you.

3. To me there is no imaginable use or necessity of this your covenant, because believers, willing or agreeing to live together in the same body, are bound by greater bands a thousandfold than any covenant they can make between themselves, to perform mutually all manner of Christian love, service, and duties whatsoever. Christ himself is the greatest of all bands, and of all manner of obligements and engagements whatsoever, both to knit and hold Christians together, to make them of one heart and of one soul,

and to keep them so; by whom (*i. e.* by Christ) all the body being coupled and knit together, &c., Eph. iv. 16. And where the Scriptures speak of other bands with him, and besides him (yet all relating to him), endearing and binding Christians together as close as ever their hearts and souls will pack or work into one, amongst them all your covenant cometh not into any remembrance. 'There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your vocation. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' Surely, if they had been joined and jointed together by any such covenant as you speak of, and this covenant been of divine institution, and of that high and sovereign consequence, as to give them their life, being, and substance, as a church or body; the apostle could not so far have forgotten himself as not to have mentioned it amongst its fellows, especially there being no place (that I can readily call to mind) more commodious throughout all his writings, to have made a particular and express mention hereof than here. And, for my part, I freely and ingenuously, and in the simplicity of my heart, profess to you that I neither know what further or greater duty or service of love, in any kind I can desire or wish, of those my brethren in Christ, upon whom the providence of God (together with my own voluntary election) either hath or hereafter shall cast me in church fellowship, than what they stand bound by the common band of our mutual interest in the same God, in the same Lord, in the same baptism, in the same hope, to exhibit, and tender, and perform unto me, without the express of any such covenant made with or unto me. Nor yet can I conceive how possibly I should have any better, richer, or stronger assurance from them for the performance hereof unto me, by the virtue or aid of any such covenant, above what I have by the power of that grace or godliness which (as far as I am able to judge) worketh effectually in them, and subjecteth them to all the said bands and obligations. Nor can I think that he whose strength to do evil will serve him to trample under foot the blood of the Lord Christ, to cast the commandments of the glorious God behind his back, to betray the hope of his own peace and glory, will ever be kept in a Christian compass towards me, by any promise, band, or covenant of his own. I know not how to think it a sin in me not to desire or exact a greater security for my portion in the saints than God himself hath given me and established me in. If here your answer be, that your covenant respecteth as well every man's faithfulness towards God, as discharge of duty one towards another; and therefore in this regard (at least) there may be a necessity of it; to this I answer (in few words), 1, why is not the unnecessary part (at least) of your covenant (which I conceive to be the greatest), viz., that which concerns the covenanter's duty towards his fellows, struck off? 2. If such a covenant as this, with or towards God, be so necessary a duty, why is the place of it nowhere to be found amongst all the commandment of God? Doubtless God requires it not at our hands to be either more provident or jealous for his glory than he is himself. 3. And, lastly, this covenant is neither lawful before baptism, nor necessary after; therefore the necessity of it falls to the ground, and is not defensible. That it is not lawful before baptism, is evident, because it is not lawful for a church to receive the unbaptized into fellowship with them, as members of their body, neither is there example or appearance of warrant in Scripture for such a thing. As evident it is, that after baptism it is altogether unnecessary, because baptism doth immediately qualify for church fellowship (as hath been said, your own principles not gainsaying), and your church itself, by admitting any to her baptism, *ipso facto*, admits into her fellowship. Therefore, I add,

4. That the requiring and exacting of such a covenant of men, and the imparting of church fellowship upon it, I conceive to be an unchristian usurpation upon the consciences of men, and a tempting of God, by laying such a burden upon his people, which he must give strength (more than otherwise were necessary) to bear, or otherwise they must suffer (at least) if not fall under it. And I believe, I know some, worthy every ways of the honour (according to the line of men), who, desirous of entrance into some of your churches, were turned back by a dislike of that new door of your covenant.

And, lastly, we conceive the exacting and giving such a covenant is not only a thing unnecessary, and a ὑπερ ὃ γέγραπται, a something above anything that is written, but of worse inconvenience also (at least, as many of those that are engaged in it are wont to draw and interpret the importance thereof). For many look upon the covenant they have made with a particular church as a partition wall, wholly to separate them in care, affection, dependence, &c., upon all other churches, and the saints of God throughout the world; and take it for an authentical discharge and release from heaven, from troubling themselves any ways with the affairs of other churches, or ministering unto their necessities at any time. It was not much short of this, which a great defender of your faith professed plainly unto me not long since, and that before some witnesses. Calvin well observes, upon Rom. xvi. 16, that Paul's study and desire was, by his careful remembrance, and sending the mutual salutations of one church to another, *quantum in se est, mutuo amoris nexu devincire inter se omnia Christi membra*, as far as lay in his power, to bind all the members of Christ wheresoever in one and the same mutual band and affection together. Now if Paul herein did the will and commandment of God (which I cannot think you will deny), then as our Saviour charged the scribes and pharisees that they made the commandment of God of no effect (*i. e.* they had taken a course to do it, done that which directly tended thereunto), by their tradition, so (we conceive) we may justly challenge your covenant, for an ill look or malignant aspect upon that part of the will of God, wherein he desires that all believers, all the world over, should desire to maintain a free intercourse of the dearest love and tenderest affection one towards another. The mighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ teach us how to make something of nothing, and by the use of a miserable, distracted, and broken world, to compass and fetch in the day of eternity. Grace, peace, and truth be multiplied to you and yours from the great fountain of the heavenly treasures.

I am, yours in the Lord for the greatest services of Christian love and acquaintance,

JOHN GOODWIN.

COLMAN STREET, LONDON, *October* 25. 1639.

To the Reverend Mr John Goodwin.

MY ancient friend and dear brother in the Lord, and work of the Lord, I received from you now about ten weeks since a letter, together with an enclosed confutation of the church covenant (as you suppose it is) practised amongst us. Your letter is full enough of provocation to an answer, which you needed not to have seemed so much to doubt. And yet further to provoke unto it, and to get ground of us in it too, I hear that copies either of your letter or query, or both, as by you sent to me, were dispersed everywhere abroad, and some afore the time they came to my hand. Your letter bears date from you October 25.; I received it about the 20th of November. You had indeed

used liberty of speech enough in your letter to me, as yourself excuses it, because (as you say) you know I am well able to bear it, yea, and this also. And whereas now you, or at least those who had yours so long afore myself, may think it high time to expect a full answer, I must ingenuously tell you, what perhaps in most men's eyes will yet add to that advantage you have already taken, that I do but now begin to consider by way of study to answer your objections. You then took me in the very midst of many other notions upon another subject, which both my own heart and promises had engaged me in. And truly I resolved that this of yours should not take me off, notwithstanding all those urgencies, until I had quitted myself of that which hath so much took up my thoughts, that (God knows) I have not cast a thought, more than what arose in the very first reading of it, upon this of yours. And besides other reasons for this, I thought it a little unnatural to extrude what I was then a-going with, or to entertain any other conception that might weaken or abortive it, and I have not strength enough to go with two together. But now that I am delivered of that burden, I shall, as health, and many other ministerial labours, which my heart is much more in, will permit, apply myself, through Christ, to satisfy you in this, and I long and am straitened till I have accomplished it. But now I must further tell you, to your greater advantage still for the present, that I foresee the true and right stating this one particular query, which you have singled out of the drove as the weakest (which you thought to hunt and pursue to death), together with the clearing of it according to your mind, will necessarily require yet a longer time than happily may be expected. It was wisely done to begin to set down first before this small fort, which being thus singly set upon, and alone, you made account to carry with an easy and glorious conquest; for indeed it lies somewhat high and remotely up in the regions of those other fundamental opinions about church fellowship wherein we differ from you. So as, to speak truth, I cannot so fairly come at you to raise your siege until I have forced you to give up truths of greater moment, which, when I shall have done, this about a church covenant shall fall into our hands again with few or no blows. I could for the present make out an answer sufficient to your arguments, as in your discourse you will needs state the question, by nothing but a bare relation of what is our common practice and judgment here at Arnheim in this particular, which, had you informed yourself of afore you fell upon us, I am confident you would never have begun the quarrel with us here, and have made this the great seat of the war. For as to the putting any to deliver their judgments in points of doubtful disputations, upon and before admission into our church (I speak it in the words of the charge in the letter, and by some expressions in the arguments, I perceive it one ground of this quarrel, supposing that this is the manner of our covenant), we know not what you mean. Look what knowledge and light agreeing with ours any one voluntarily holds forth, we take and hear with rejoicing in the unanimity; but profess in rigour to exact no more assent and light (I speak in matters of church fellowship) than of being convinced that church fellowship is an ordinance of Christ, for saints to enjoy other ordinances in together, which is no more than what is essentially and absolutely necessary to that very act of joining in it, and is in effect to profess they understand what they are about to do, that so we may be sure that a name and ordinance of God is not taken in vain by them. And for any such covenant (which you blame so for length, that the apostles their dispatch was but an ace to this covenant of ours, and for tyranny as unchristian usurpation upon the consciences of men, and a tempting of God by laying such a burden upon his people. And for schism, you would accuse it as a par-

tition-wall wholly to separate men in care, affection, dependence upon all other churches and saints of God throughout the world) it is no more with us than this, an assent and resolution professed (by them to be admitted by us), with promise to walk in all those ways pertaining to this fellowship, so far as they shall be revealed to them in the gospel.

Thus briefly, indefinitely, and implicitly, and in such like words, and no more or otherwise, do we apply ourselves to men's consciences, not obtruding the mention of any one particular upon them before or in admission, but wholly leaving before and after their spirits free to the entertainment of the light that shines, or shall shine, both to them and us out of the word, and unto the sweet guidance of the Holy Spirit of Christ to lead both them and us unto all truth, without either our haling or driving them. Indeed, we that are to admit, do it upon a conviction and persuasion of the party's true grace, some way made forth visible to us. And we think any Christian man may blush to name (now under the New Testament, when types and shadows are fled away, and the body of the truth is come) a body, and church, and members of Christ our Head, and not mean saints, and by saints understand at least such as, by the rules of the word, given by God himself to judge others by, are visible saints. And we find confession with the mouth of the work of faith in the heart, a means among other sanctified by God to make any one's grace evident and visible to others; and the judgment we make hereupon to admit our members, is no other or more rigorous than what the word holds forth as meet for us to judge of others by, and but such as I know your conscience carries about with you, and which you can never lose, and which, as occasion is given, you do use to judge of the differences of men by; and we know that in us it is righteous judgment, being squared by the rule given us, although it is not infallible judgment, for men may deceive us in our applications of it. Thus we do and have practised, and this is all for matter of covenant or confession in use with us, and that from the beginning. And thus much in effect you grant, or seem to grant, whilst about confession in the beginning of the second argument you use these words, 'Many instances there are wherein only (say you) upon a sober profession of their faith in Christ, and entertainment of the gospel, men have been received into churches,' speaking of Scripture instances in the apostles' times. And in the beginning of the third argument you add these words, Believers, willing and agreeing to live together in the same body with you, afterwards instancing in your own, you do call church fellowship. Well, let them be believers, willing and desirous upon knowledge of each other to be such upon a profession of their faith, and also what this fellowship is, and let them withal but agree, by mutual consent and assent expressed to each other (or how else do they agree to live together in a fellowship and body ?), so to live in that relation, and all the duties, and you and I are agreed. And now suppose unto this agreeing of yours we join covenanting and promise, yet still but with those indefinite expressions mentioned, assuredly whatever you and I mutually agree to do, if it be a matter of moment, we may as well and as lawfully promise and covenant to do. And therein what do we more than tie a double knot where you tie a single one ? And yet, that you and I may still agree, if you or any believer comes to be admitted among us upon the terms aforesaid, and did scruple the word covenant and promise, we would take your single agreement without such double security. And this knot and band, thus firmly by a covenant made to tie us among ourselves as to the duties of this relation, is yet so far from being a wall of partition (as you would fain charge both us and it) from all saints and churches else, whom we love, pray for, hold communion with, and honour as the spouse and churches of Christ, and

yours also (only give us leave to have our churches not separated, divided, though in some things differing from yours, which therefore we could not be permitted to enjoy in our own land); it is so far, I say, from being a wall of separation from all others, that we count it not indissoluble among ourselves (as that of marriage is), but only obliging us to live together in this fellowship and the duties of it as becometh saints, whilst we are cast to live together as men by our outward calling and conditions, which cohabitation, the first, though remotest ground of church fellowship, and almost of all fellowship else, wherein, if providence maketh any alteration requiring a just remove, they may lawfully seek, and we do willingly grant a dismission from us to any other church, notwithstanding this our covenant obliging us to this particular fellowship; but whilst we live together, a covenant, and that made afore God, and an oath unto God, are both and alike ordinances which may warrantably be used in all affairs human and divine, wherein there passeth *mutuus compactus*, a mutual agreement between men, or any special relation made up among men by agreement. Thus, if you marry, you make a solemn covenant of it to perform the duties of that relation; if you enter into any new league, even of friendship, you may bind it by a covenant, as did Jonathan and David. Thus, to be admitted into any body or polity civil, men make not only a covenant, but do often add thereto an oath, and such is called the covenant of God, as that of marriage, and the oath of God, as that between prince and people in a commonwealth. Now, if this church fellowship be a body, and that to be entered into by believers agreeing to live in the same body, as your words and the truth express, and such a body as superadds anything of a special relation mutual between each other of that church more than that more common communion and relation of and unto all saints in the church catholic (and if it did not so, there were no need of any such act of agreement to live in the same body, for they were members of the catholic church without it and before it), why, then, should not such a covenant, and the use and benefit of it, be allowed to this body, and special relation of church fellowship, to form up and knit fast the agreement of it, as is common to all bodies and societies and particular relations made up in the world? not any of which you can well make up, or not so well, without a covenant, or at least an agreement, and that passed by way of words mutually expressing consent, and must needs be confessed most suiting with and nearest to the very dictate of nature, whilst these societies shall be made up of men to whom, to that very end that they might be sociable, their speech was given them. And so this comes to be argued not barely from the faint illustration of a lifeless and lame similitude and resemblance, but from the true and real analogy and like interest and correspondence with the nature of the thing itself, which this divine society, body, and relation of men doth in common hold and retain in this common bond of all such societies for their making up, namely, an agreement expressed in words, and a solemn covenant, and this *jure naturali*, even by a right which both God and the nature of the thing itself hath endued it withal.

First, Nature doth evince it, the laws and rules of which doth run along with and are alike common to things spiritual and human, so far as both are said to agree in one common nature together; for as when God made speaking to men in a public assembly (as that of preaching and prophesying) a sacred ordinance, instantly did all the laws of nature and right reason, that seem to regulate and covenantly concur to all orderly speeches and orations of men in public assemblies made, fall upon this ordinance also, as to speak aloud, not to speak in an unknown or strange tongue which the assemblies understand not, not to speak confusedly two or three at once, but one by

one. Even so when God made this fellowship of saints, and this special relation of a few in a church fellowship and ordinance, instantly doth this of making up this relation by a joint agreement, and constantly expressed in words, present itself as the natural and common way of knitting all sorts of men together in all other relations else in the world.

Secondly, God hath ordained it; for, if God hath thus lent in common (as we may so speak) a solemn covenant, as before himself made, unto all other relations and societies of any importance unto mankind, which, when in such civil affairs used, is to be esteemed sacred and an ordinance of God, a covenant with God (as was said) and an oath with God, hath he not with that same breath much more allotted and allowed the practice of such a covenant to have place in the obligation of this divine society and relation, which is itself an ordinance, and so of the two the more proper element for such a holy covenant? so as this is so far from being an ὑπερ ὁ γεγραπται, anything above what is written (as you speak of it), that it rather comes within the compass of the apostle's χρειαν [ουκ] ἐχετε γραφειν, yea, indeed, which needed not at all to have been written; for (as he then speaks of love) ye are taught it of God in a law of nature spiritualised, who also hath fully, roundly taught us to acknowledge, if we be spiritual, yea, but reasonable, such dictates of nature and right reason in things wherein divine ordinances and human do alike partake in common, to be no less than the commands of God, for of such like rules (even the same we but now instanced in) doth the apostle there speak. Nor yet is this covenant the renewing that solemn general covenant of grace entered into at conversion, where the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper are the seals which you mention as band sufficient; but this covenant is but a particular covenant, and so a branch of that general one, and but to oblige unto the duties more properly and specially pertaining unto this fellowship, though all this in the virtue of the general covenant; and therefore although (as you say truly) the common band of our mutual interest in the same God, in the same baptism, &c., do bind us to all those duties, yet that hinders not a special particular covenant to be made upon some special duties upon various occasions, even as particular leases and compacts use to be made out of some general charter; for example, baptism, and all those common interests in the same Lord, &c., do oblige man and wife, master and servant, friend and friend, and also societies, unto all the duties belonging unto these several relations as they are laid down in the word, and yet particular and solemn covenants do and may pass between men for the performance of all these, or (to take your own instance which in your third argument you have used) for the confirming those duties and services of love to be performed towards yourself by those your brethren in Christ, upon whom the providence of God, together with your own voluntary election, either here or hereafter, shall cast you into church fellowship with. To maintain ministers for their labour and work of the ministry is (to go on to use your own words) one duty and service of love to which they stand bound by the common band of their mutual interest in the same God, in the same baptism, in the same hope, to exhibit, tender, and perform unto you, and which you may expect from the power of grace which worketh effectually in them, and subjecteth them to all the same bonds and obligations, and yet I believe you did, at least you might, expressly have covenanted with them that they should perform it; and yet what is this but a duty and a branch of church fellowship you have a statute for in the New Testament? And doth not the like reason hold for all other duties of that whole fellowship? And of this sort were those covenants which, besides the obligation of the general covenant in the law in Horeb, and in circum-

cision, were made of old by the people of God, the Jews, namely, special covenants upon special occasions made to engage them more expressly unto some special duties unto God or one another, whereof two instances you cite, but withal do shut the doors of those sanctuaries upon us, if we should thither fly for refuge, by alleging the forfeiture of our privilege therein, 'ourselves having (as you speak) polluted them by destroying all sympathy and agreement between a national church and that which we call instituted or particular.' But we affirm with all orthodox divines, that all the moral equity of these covenants do still hold under the New Testament as much as ever, as all things that were moral under the covenant also do, as a seventh-day-Sabbath, infant baptism, &c. And the ministers' maintenance is argued from that of not muzzling the ox's mouth; and we have destroyed only that sympathy with what was but typical then, which part of this sanctuary God himself both polluted and abandoned, whilst we deny those wonted arguments drawn from the mould and pattern of the national church then, and from the universal mixture of all Israel therein, to prove the like now in any whole national church in the world. And we affirm the dedication of all that people to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests, and so generally to be members of that church, to be done but in a type and shadow, as most things else were, although a real holiness was commanded then as now, and required by God of all then as now; as were their temples also types of that royal nation, and true priesthood, and living stones, of saints in truth, and visibly such in reality, as Peter expoundeth it, of whom alone a particular church, the only instituted church we can find mentioned in the New Testament succeeding that national, is to consist, as the only truth and reality of that type. And as God made persons and actions unclean in the type, that morally were not unclean, so on the contrary, in the like type all the nation holy, who yet morally were neither such, nor by the saints in those times were judged such; but the moral part of this sanctuary, which is still to continue, yourself shall defile and destroy, if you either affirm the ground of making those special covenants, not to have been moral, or being moral, not to hold for pastors for a church or society, or society of men together, to enter into the like now. But I resolved not to write a scripture, which yet confirms all this, but do now only leave you unto your own reason, spiritualised, to answer you out of what hath been said, in all that is materially objected by you, yea, even to that same reason that tells you that twice two is four, as yourself speaks of, there appearing so clearly error in the greatest part of our whole way. And now you know both our judgments and practice, although the difference between you and us in this particular can prove but small, to have answered all the material things in the query, so far as they relate unto this covenant, would be but an easy and no long work; yet, for their sakes, to whom you have made this challenge against our whole church fellowship so public, and endeavoured to make as odious as public, who yet are ignorant of it, I shall, God willing, put myself to further pains, yet to shew more largely the foundation of our church work, and so of this practice; and in doing this, I shall take the larger compass, and require the more time, because I see you will not allow me so much as a stick or a stone unto this building, yea, I am to fight for the very ground I am to build upon; for notwithstanding what I have took hold of in your discovery as granted by you, yet I cannot assure myself of any one principle from you about church-fellowship, but that there is a catholic church, and a communion of saints in the creed, which we all acknowledge; for otherwise, when we speak of a particular instituted church, you seem to make it a matter of our making, and not as of God's institution. And besides,

if I should go about to beg any one of these principles, even the lowest about a particular church, I know not what, nor indeed how large I may be denied. You have enacted a supreme law, as you call it, against all such beggars in this dissertation; and if the foundation should be denied, what can we do till we have established them? I am resolved, therefore, and must be at the more pains, and expense of time, who yet am able to take but little pains in much time, to satisfy and make good, as I go along, all those principles which you slight as loose and faint suppositions. And therein I have but one request to make to you, and by you to make to others, to whom you have made your letter and objections so common: let not this, my taking a longer day, add one hair to the stature of your confidence, which is full high and tall enough already in any man's view, even in the very first words of your arguments, neither unto your own, or any of their opinions of the strength of these their arguments. But above all, I beseech you not to draw so hard a consequence from the suspension of a more full answer, as to expect me sooner with you than an answer; for I assure you, did not the merit of the cause itself, and the condition of it, not being understood by most, require it, that men may come to a right understanding of us, I should not have needed any more time for the clearing of any scruple or doubt, which all this your discourse had any way begotten in my own reason or conscience, than simply when I was a reading it first over. And in this my answer, I shall not go about to contend with you, either in rhetoric, or subtilty of answering, but in solidity and faithfulness, through the grace of Christ. To say I shall so answer thus or thus soon, I make account is but the credit of the answer, which I have learned not to strive with you about, but to give you, as you see, all the fair advantages; but to answer you with words of truth and soberness, that may, through Christ, convince you and others, shall be my only aim; and then I know, although I should be long in doing of it, yet delays and charges will therein be paid with interest and advantage unto the cause and truth, which I expect more than what I am else in this world. Neither yet will I undertake to answer you as you expect, letter for letter, tittle for tittle, word for word, in some things in your letter. I know such retortions are affixable to any person or cause, and never decided controversies; much less will I begin to vie moral imputations with you; no, though you should begin, and we fear not what you can beside; but my endeavours shall be to return you matter for matter, and in that business alone, through Christ that strengthens me, to give you measure for measure, pressed down and running over; and withal, which shall be unto me the supreme law of this dissertation, to give a new consideration to every grain that addeth weight in anything you say, yea, and recall and retract also whatever I shall find that we are out in. And this kind of inconstancy, however you should blemish me for, yet I count one of the greatest perfections of us imperfect men, imperfect in knowledge here below. And all this I shall do with the greatest candour and simplicity, and which shall also be sacred to me along this dispute, so to handle matters as to be sure to part good friends. And, in the mean time, let this be laid up in your bosom, to sweeten these waters of strife between us, viz., an assurance from me, that you still hold in my heart as high and full esteem of so great worth, learning, and piety, as ever you did; and how much you did, yourself knows, and many others; and withal, that I retain as candid a judgment of the truth of your church state and calling in the ministry, for the essentials of it, as is in any of your best hearers. Account but of me as the servant of Christ, the unworthiest, and one of your most faithful, loving friends,

THO. GOODWIN.

TWO LETTERS

OF THE AUTHOR TO THE REVEREND MR ROBERT ASTY OF NORWICH,

CONCERNING

THE EQUAL AUTHORITY AND POWER OF PASTOR AND TEACHER IN A CHURCH.

THE FIRST LETTER.

Reverend Sir,—I see you are pressed in your spirit (and it may be from the Lord) to seek my judgment in the case of your accepting or not accepting your call at Norwich to the ministry. I perceive you have given up yourself to serve Christ in the way of preaching, with good and sincere intention; and you do only doubt, by reason of the sense of your own inability, whether you should accept of a fixed place of office to be added to that of preaching without it. To this case thus stated, I give, according to my present poor judgment, two answers: the first is, that the great sense of your own inability, though, as considered in itself, it may deter you, yet that you have this deep sense beforehand, ought to be a great encouragement to you, that God hath given you such a spirit. As in the case of profession of religion, the fears of falling away, and not being able to do anything as we ought (and twenty such discouragements), ought not nor do they finally keep any that are sincere from their profession of religion; but (as saith one) the power and assistance of Christ they are to live upon for enabling them. Parallel to this, whether you should be a Christian or no, is whether you should be a minister or no. Sensibleness of our insufficiency is a character of such a frame of spirit as above all fits a man for the ministry; 'for who is sufficient for these things,' as of ourselves? and wherein you are weak, you shall find yourself strong through the power of Christ that rests upon you; for sufficiency is of God, and we are not able to think a good thought of ourselves. And with these apprehensions did Paul both enter into the ministry, and was carried on in it; and as for your apprehensions of your gifts for the ministry, and fitness for that work, you are to take the judgment of a church that have been used to men of gifts and great gifts, now in choosing of you, and that as by the Holy Ghost; for it is the Holy Ghost who makes overseers over the church. Therefore the church's choice, and the promise that in what God calls a man to he will not leave him nor forsake him, may be sufficient satisfaction to you. And then besides there is a special blessing will accompany a man in an office, through the grace of God, more than doth in his ordinary preaching without office. I use to say the loadstone doth draw,

but especially if it be set in steel, 1 Cor. xii. 28, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Sir, I should advise this concerning him that is to be joined with you in office, endeavour to observe by all ways you can his temper of spirit, not as to religion (I suppose sincerity and ability to be in him), but as to his carriage, his natural temper. There are oftentimes very great burdens upon men's spirits that are yoked together, and breaches from unsuitableness of spirit do often fall out into sad events in churches.—The man is utterly a stranger to me. —You know the sad events between Paul and Barnabas ; there was a selfishness in Barnabas to have Mark go with them. He was his sister's son, and though Barnabas was a good man, an apostle, yet he stuck unto his selfish end so much, he was so pertinacious in it, that it caused a breach to part, and they never met again that we read of; and Paul was in the right. I heard since you wrote to me, as if there were some discouragements that you have besides them that you wrote, which I must leave wholly to yourself. But if you be yoked with your own consent, you are irrevocable ; but yet you are free as to your own consent, and you have as great a freedom on your part to accept or not, as the church had of choosing on their part.

For your other query, of the equality or inequality of power in the office of a pastor and a teacher, and of their administrations, wherein they differ. For the first, I know no difference of superiority, and the apostle condemned it in Diotrephes, 3 John ver. 9, of one above the other, they are prophesying elders both : Eph. iv. 11, ' Some pastors and teachers ;' they are yoked together alike, whereas the former are single, ' some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists.' These being extraordinary ministers, they may admit subordination, as an evangelist was under and lower than the office of an apostle ; but these two are yoked together in one, ' some pastors and teachers.' They that labour in the word and doctrine are to have double honour alike ; there is not a third honour to be given to one above the other. The 65th and 66th chapters of Isaiah are promises of all the last and best times of the gospel, which ver. 22 shews sufficiently, and their worship is spoken in ver. 23, their officers in the 21st, whereof there were two sorts in general, priests and Levites. The Levites were those that helped about sacrifices, and were under the priests, but the priests were equal ; and who are the priests but those whose lips preserve knowledge ? For the substance of their office they were co-ordinate officers, not subordinate, as the Levites to the priests. Answerably in Rom. xii., where the officers of a church are set out at the 6th verse, and so on to the 9th, he says, ' Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us,' for ministerial gifts are always suited, and then he divides them first into two generals : 1, prophecy; 2, ministry. He speaks of ordinary officers. Those that have to prophesy have to do with matters of faith : ' Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith given us ; or ministry, ' Let us wait on our ministry.' Then he comes to subdivide these into these particulars : first, ' he that teacheth, to attend on teaching,' as upon an office ; ' he that exhorteth, on exhortation.' Those are the particulars belonging to prophecy ; and as *pastor* is set before *teacher* in the Ephesians, here *teacher* is set before *pastor ;* so that, comparing one with another, I make them equal with those offices that belong to the ministry. The other generals are three, as it follows, and are lower and under : ' he that giveth,' and ' he that ruleth,' and ' that sheweth mercy.' You may see this opened at large by Mr Cotton in *The Way of the Churches of New England.* This for the equality ; only I say this, as to the highest of their work, which is the word and prayer, they are both equal.

For the second. For the difference in their administrations, this is one principle with me, that the distinction of officers arises from the distinction

of gifts God doth give unto men fitted for office, and I found it upon 1 Cor. xii. 4–6, 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations,' successes of God's working upon men's hearts, that is, from God the Father. All three persons are interested in the ministry as well as in our salvation. The gifts are what the Holy Ghost gives, and endows a man habitually withal, and they are divers. The administrations are offices appointed by the Lord Christ the great Shepherd, and there are differences of administrations suited for the difference of exercise of gifts. And, thirdly, the success is from God the Father, who is the God of all grace and the founder of all, as the 6th verse has it. Now the diversity of gifts for teacher and for pastor are as apparent, and that before called to office, which is suited to these diversities of gifts, habitually given by the Holy Ghost, as Jesus Christ appointed offices; and happy is the man that is a minister that is called to that kind of office which his gifts suits, for then they will run in a more natural channel. The diversity of gifts by the Holy Ghost doth appear. Some more comparatively have a powerful way of exhorting, persuading, working upon the affections, and abound in uses; others have a gift of handling things in a doctrinal way, to open and fetch out the true meaning and sense of Scripture, which often needs an acuteness to find out, and to give reasons for the proof of a thing, an ability to answer objections and untie knots, have a good judgment in controversies, yet both may have ability either way, but with a disproportion one more than the other. Answerably in that Rom. xii. of the prophesying officers, one is an exhorter, to bend himself to exhortation; and exhortation is put for comfort, and for like reason for reproof, and for what is directly practical. And the teacher he has ability to establish men's hearts in truth, and they are to bend themselves accordingly: 'he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that teacheth, on teaching.' 1 Cor. xii. 8, 'To one is given wisdom, to another knowledge, by the same Spirit;' these are meant plainly of ordinary gifts. That which follows in the 9th verse is healing, and those that are extraordinary. Thus also that place in Timothy is understood by some of preaching officers that are worthy of double honour, that labour in the word, that is, of exhortation, and that labour in doctrine; and some have stretched the difference to be set out by that scheme of a church in Rev. iv. of the four beasts; the fourth was like an eagle, that has an eagle's eye into truths, &c.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my thoughts that I have at present (for my notes about church government at present are not with me, being I am removing). With my love remembered to you, and prayers to guide you, I rest, your very affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

THO. GOODWIN.

LONDON, *March the 25th* 1675.

THE SECOND LETTER.

REVEREND SIR,—I received your important letter about two months since, which was time enough to have answered it if opportunity had served; but truly I have been weak and sickish ever since, and my eyes fail me that I cannot write myself, so much as to set down my own thoughts and private studies: and, besides, I did suppose that you had the strength of what I could say in that letter I wrote you by Mr Berman, which yourself says in your last satisfied you so much, that I thought I needed to write no more,

or if I did, I should but fall into the same thoughts again. But you having now revived it in your letters to the elders in general, and therein required my cognisance, I strain myself to write again.

This controversy about the authority and power of pastor and teacher was first started among the Brownist churches in Holland, by Francis Johnson, one of the rigid separation, who out of the Old Testament went about to prove the government by pastors and teachers under the New to be conformed to the analogy of the Old, and so to make a pastor in a congregational church to be as a high priest; but, as I remember, it took not with his brethren. This book I have either lost, or it was burnt in the fire of London, else I would send it you.

The arguments in my present thoughts, to prove that the pastor and teachers are equal in power (which is the particular point of which you inquire), are such as these.

1. The first is taken from what the apostle says, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.' 1. He speaks it of the preaching elders of the New Testament, the ordinary ministers of the word. 2. He speaks what esteem they are to have according to their order and rank from all men, and then much more from the church over which they are placed. 3. He speaks universally of all such as are the ministers to such churches: 'Let a man so account of us,' &c.

Now their office in common to them all is to be stewards of Christ and of the mysteries of God, whereby the sacraments are especially intended, as well as the dispensation of the word and prayer. For the sacraments are, in a figurative signification, the person of Christ himself, and in a special manner mysteries; and the ancients did usually and generally term them mysteries; and accordingly that place, Eph. v. 32, 'This is a great mystery,' is interpreted by them a great sacrament; and thereupon the papists, who are the great pretenders to antiquity, have made marriage a sacrament to this day; but that scripture is genuinely meant of Christ and his church, as appears by the words spoken after.

2. When our Saviour Christ did institute the new ministry of the gospel in the room of the old, he first chose twelve apostles, who were the extraordinary ministers of the New Testament; and besides those, he sent out seven disciples to preach the gospel, and sent them two by two, one having like authority and equality with the other. And these are, as Bishop Andrews doth interpret it rightly, the standing ordinary ministers of congregations.

3. When Christ at last, afore his ascension, gave authority to go preach the gospel, and teach all nations, with the same breath he gives them authority to administer the sacraments, Go and baptize as well as preach the word. The commission was for the sacraments and word together, and for one sacrament as well as another, so as the administration of these are of like extent, as occasion is; and correspondently to this, the apostle Paul, Eph. iv. 10, 11, confirms it: 'When he ascended up on high,' says he, 'and gave gifts unto men, he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists.' These are extraordinary ministers in those times of differing degrees and order each particular of them, and therefore each particular is distinguished by the word *some*. And then he specifies the ordinary standing ministers that were to continue in all ages to the end of the world; 'pastors and teachers,' about whom the present question is. Now observe the difference he puts. Indeed, the word *some* is set before pastors and teachers, to distinguish them from the extraordinary he had spoken of afore, and to shew they were of another rank than the former. But observe again

that he puts no such difference between the pastors and teachers; he doth not say, *some pastors*, and *some teachers*.* He doth not place the word *some* afore each, as he had done afore, but says only *pastors and teachers*, to shew they are of equal commission and rank.

4. I might here add that grand record, Rom. xii., which the apostle Paul left behind him, on purpose as it were to check the pride of the church of Rome (which the Holy Ghost foresaw would be the mistress of misrule), and to prevent that disorder of officers in the church rising unto that grandeur, to which the Roman clergy have ascended, of thrones and dominions, &c., and to depress and suppress all such attempts in those officers. The Holy Ghost left a scheme of those several officers and works of them, first dividing their functions into two heads, ver. 6, 7, prophecy and ministry, and then subdividing them into particulars, that 'he who teacheth should wait on teaching,' ver. 7. There is one preaching elder, your teacher; and 'he that exhorteth on exhortation,' there is your pastor; and these two particulars come under that first head of prophecy; and they that do so are the two preaching elders, as appears by the following words, 'Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.' So as matters of faith are the subject matter and work of their two offices; and then follows the three other particular officers which are to be reduced under the other general head of ministry, or διακονεία, which are the inferior officers. 'He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity,' which we call the deacon; 'he that ruleth, with diligence,' the ruling elder is meant; 'he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness,' which intends looking to the sick and infirm, which is a nauseating work. And if any object that this office of shewing mercy runs in the language of the masculine gender, I answer,

(1.) Whether it be a man or woman who undertakes the work, it is all one.

(2.) The apostle had begun the enumeration of these officers in the masculine gender.

(3.) It is to be considered, that in all the other particular offices he mentions, the officers thereof are males, and therefore at the last he continues the same gender, noting out a person, to keep to the analogy of the language with which he had begun. This chapter I thus opened in the assembly, but you may see it more largely in Mr Cotton's Treatise of the *Way of the Churches in New England*.

5. Consider what the apostle says, 1 Tim. v. 17, 'Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' The apostle's scope is to set the differing valuation that churches were to put upon their officers for their works' sake, and he puts a special note upon the preaching elders that labour in the word and doctrine. The difference he puts is only between them and the ruling elders; but he yokes them, viz., the pastor and teacher together, as co-ordinate and of like rank, for their works' sake; yea (and as I have thought), with a distinction of their offices, intimated in those phrases, 'that labour,' namely, in the 'word' of exhortation, which is the pastor's office (it is the apostle's phrase elsewhere), and 'in doctrine,' which the teacher is to apply himself to.

6. The several gifts God gives (which are suited to offices, and officers to them) do warrant this distinction. Thus, in 1 Cor. xii., he discourses of the several gifts and offices of those that are the eminent members of the body; and by helps in government, ver. 28, I understand the ruling elder assisting their teachers. In the fore part of the chapter, ver. 4–6, he shews how God

* See Ainsworth's Discourse on the Ministry, in 4to.

has given gifts (that is, infused habits), and they are suited to offices, and both blessed by God.

Now, among those gifts fitting men for those administrations and operations, 'to one is given a word of wisdom,' which is more proper to a pastor; 'to another a word of knowledge,' that is for the teacher, which is a gift more speculative. And you may find in experience, that some men's gifts are more for exhortation, and to set home uses; others to invent reasons for proofs and explanations of truths. And look into your auditors, and you will find some to affect a ministry that moves and persuades their affections, and stirs their wills; and you will find others that affect depths of knowledge, and each profiteth by either, for that is the rule, 1 Cor. xii. 7. The ministration of the Spirit in all these administrations is given to every man to profit withal; and thus harmoniously doth one thing answer, and is suited to another, and by these God shews his care and wisdom, by several gifts and offices suited to men's needs and spirits, and shews his love in making provision for the defects and wants that are in his poor saints. The teacher has the care of their understandings, to cure the errors and defects therein; and the pastor has their wills and affections principally committed to his charge, to work upon and move them; and which of these you will prefer most in man, the will or understanding to be the more principal faculty, you may by the same measure give dignity to these officers for their work sake.

7. God further shews he has a care of men's lives and conversations, in setting up the ruling elder to watch over their conversations, for that is his charge. God shews his care over their bodies and estates, in appointing the office of a deacon to look to their wants; and he takes care of their bodily infirmities, by appointing them that are to shew mercy. And thus God has taken care for all about his people, both for his own honour, and their good who are his children. He hath sufficiently provided for their education in this world, till they come to heaven. As persons that are great kings and princes have several offices for every business, though very small, and they have them to shew their greatness, so Christ will have the like too in his church.

Let these things be sufficient to answer this my scope and design, and to prove that these two offices of pastor and teacher, and their gifts and labours, are co-ordinate in respect of preference of one to the other, or dependence of the one upon the other, much more are they freed from any subjection of one unto the other. So that to advance one above the other is an apparent violation of the sacred order which God has instituted and fixed, and is an injurious usurpation out of ignorance and pride, such as was in Diotrephes, whom the apostle John so condemns. The breaking of churches will be hazarded if this principle prevail; and let any man take heed how he defile the temple of God, much more destroy it, for him God will destroy.

I am, yours, &c.,

THO. GOODWIN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I intended by my letter to take away all precedency whatsoever, and my reasons do manifestly tend to it, and therefore I make it my conclusion; and those words in respect of preference, are all one as if I had said in respect of precedency.

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